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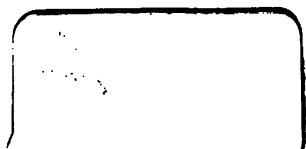
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very truly yours
Saml Gibson

MEMOIRS
OF
MRS. JANE GIBSON,
OF NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

INCLUDING
SELECTIONS FROM HER CORRESPONDENCE.

BY FRANCIS A. WEST.

LONDON :
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PREFACE.

THE aim of the following Memoirs is simply to form such a memorial of the departed, as may remind surviving friends of her character and virtues ; diffuse the influence of her example ; and lead those who can appreciate the work of Divine grace, to “ glorify God ” in her.

To accomplish these purposes, the author has endeavoured to make such a selection from the papers and letters of Mrs. Gibson, as might exhibit her progress in divine and human knowledge ; her attainment of Christianity in its vital power ; the influence of religion in the discharge of her personal and relative duties ; the spiritual exercises of her evangelical, vigorous, and rational piety ; and the tranquillizing and sustaining power of faith in the calmness with which she closed her life in the vigour of her days.

The difficulties of such an undertaking are necessarily great, and can only be conceived by those who have experienced them. The papers placed in the author’s hands were very voluminous and diversified ; and where there was so much, and almost equal, merit, selection was found to be exceedingly difficult ; and as he had not the advantage of consulting others, and was continually interrupted by important engagements, it is not difficult to believe that he has some-

times erred in his choice. In a few cases, he has contented himself with extracting what was characteristic, or honourable to the deceased, or likely to be useful to the living, rather than offend that sensitiveness of mind which shrinks from the public eye. When the reader differs from him in judgment on such points, he hopes it will be remembered, that he designed to give the Memoirs that individuality which would identify the subject of them in the recollection of those who knew her; and give a true representation, a full-length portrait, to others. In order to this, he has generally let Mrs. Gibson deliver her views and sentiments in her own words, and left the reader to raise his own reflections. The principles on which she acted, will, it is believed, be easily understood; and he hopes due honour is given to the Christianity to which she owed her excellence.

The biography of a female moving in comparatively private life, furnishes little incident; but it has one advantage over the records of those great characters who fill so large a space in the eye of history,—that imitation is more practicable. The example here exhibited embodies those duties which are the substantial business of life, and especially of every Christian female.

The writer can hardly expect that the volume will have influence or circulation much beyond the circle of her own friends; especially as it enters the world without the recommendation of a name, or any auspicious advantages. His aims are higher than his hopes. Whilst he most heartily wishes the compilation had

fallen into other hands, he will have the satisfaction of knowing that he has, in this instance, done his utmost to recommend a beautiful example of domestic religion, and to instruct and benefit society.

Perhaps it may be thought, that an apology is due on account of the delay in the publication of the volume. The author exceedingly regrets the circumstance, but conceives that he is more entitled to compassion, than deserving of blame. The number and onerous nature of his engagements, has been one principal hinderance to its earlier appearance.

May He who has blessed the perusal of religious biography to the edification of thousands, succeed the present attempt to spread "the glory of His grace."

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MEMOIRS
OF
MRS. JANE GIBSON.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory Remarks—Miss Gibson's early Life—Character of her mother—Miss Gibson returns from School—Usefulness in All-Saints Sunday-school—Letter to Miss F. on the Death of her Brother—Durant's Memoirs—Letter to Miss S—Correspondence on the Pre-Adamite Question—Progress in religious Knowledge—Visits London.

No species of writing is more calculated to improve mankind than the biography of the wise and good ; for none more deeply interests the passions, more readily calls forth imitation, or more effectually appeals to the conscience with dissuasions from vice, and motives to virtue. General history may have some advantages in enlarging our views of the more remote results of the principles of human conduct ; but biography, or personal history, more fully teaches us the nature of those principles, and their immediate and direct effects. The one more severely tasks the judgment ; the other more gently touches the heart. The one holds up the mirror to society ; the other benefits the individual. The one introduces us to a large and crowded assembly, all busily engaged in various pursuits, and actuated by as varied motives, while we are astonished and confused with the bustle

and turmoil, and can learn little concerning any individual ; the other presents that individual, and allows us to mark his character, to note his habits, to search after his motives ; and thus to habituate ourselves to a closer observation, a more just and full estimate of our own character, and a more decided preference to virtue and holiness.

The practice of teaching morals and forming character by the biography of good men, is not only sanctioned by the highest authorities of Pagan wisdom, but most emphatically by the records of the inspired volume ; a large portion of which consists of the histories, more or less full and minute, of those elders who, through faith, obtained a good report. There we have a gallery of portraits of every class of character, exhibited in all the varied lights of diversified circumstances. Each displays the hand of a master, equally in the outlines, the tones, the colouring, the expression ; while each is a distinctive portrait, all exhibit the family likeness in the lineaments which belong to those who are born of God.

The general character of sacred biography may teach us wherein the utility of such writing chiefly consists,—in furnishing models for practice. The end of all Scripture is practical ; for, walk in what paths we will in this Eden of truth, we find them all paths of righteousness. All Scripture is given to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. The only consecutive history of a nation, contained in the Bible, approaches to the history of a family at unity with itself by its polity and religion. The rest of its histories are almost wholly personal ; and those not chiefly of kings, statesmen, and generals, but men in the ordinary conditions of

human life. Few are called to fill distinguished stations ; and their lives do not furnish models of ordinary duty ; for the many are only benefited by those instances which are accommodate to their own circumstances. It is true, the daily round of domestic duty, and habitual regard to what is useful, furnish little incident ; nothing novel or romantic. But the absence of what is splendid or uncommon, is amply compensated by the exhibition of virtue at once imitable and useful ; the virtues which adorn character, give a charm to domestic life, and diffuse all the real good which man can render to his fellow-men.

That which is chiefly designed in the following pages, is nothing more than to present an example of practical piety, in the history of a retired female, who endeavoured to serve God in all things, found pleasure in the duties of her station, accomplished much good to others, and, with a mind and gifts of no common order, was less distinguished by their possession than by their application and use. Such examples can never be unseasonable ; but it is to be feared that the character and tendency of the age require, that a peculiar stress should be laid upon practical religion, and particularly upon those relative duties which, in the case of mothers especially, constitute the body of evangelical piety. Nothing but a design of diffusing a stimulus to duties of high importance to the Christian church, and to the real welfare of mankind, could have justified the publishing of the present *Memoir*. That end, our readers may be assured, has been steadily aimed at ; but they must concur with the writer, in order to its being fully secured.

The subject of this volume would undoubtedly have shrunk from such a public notice of her character and example, had she contemplated such a thing through

the medium of those feelings which belong to this imperfect state ; where the sensitiveness of modesty furnishes a plea for silence, or some modification of self and pride affords a pretext for obscurity. But she is now freed from the influence of those considerations which naturally belong to our present state, yet often warp even the spiritual judgment of good men ; and she would not now be reluctant to any measure, however abasing, by which Christ and his truth might be honoured, and men be led to glorify God in her.

JANE, the daughter of Nicholas and Susanna GIBSON, was born at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, July 8th, 1797. In the earliest period of infancy she displayed a measure of intelligence which excited hope of future excellence. Her mother has been often heard to relate facts which exhibit her acuteness of observation when a mere infant. When not more than two years and a half old, she used to exhort the servant of a friend to whose house she often went, to be a good girl ; enlarging at the same time on the consequences if she were not good ; and with great point asking her, " Mary, do you say your prayers ? " She early commenced learning to read, and quickly learned whatever was read to her. When her mother had thus occupied what she deemed a sufficient length of time, and had told Jane that she must now go and play, she would urgently request another lesson. On the afternoon of the first day of her going to school, she said to her mother, " I think I will not go to school any more, Mother ; " but when she was informed that it was now no longer matter of choice, but she would be required to go regularly, Jane at once submitted, and never afterwards showed the least unwillingness.

One of Miss Gibson's earliest school-companions says, that when she was about six or seven years of age, she was "a little, gay, lively, amusing thing, and much inclined to talk. She read better than any girl of her age in the school; whilst the lessons she had to commit to memory were repeated so correctly as to excite the surprise of the other children." The same lady afterwards met her at another school, when about twelve years of age. They studied together in a spirit of stimulating but innocent rivalry; and their master, perceiving with pleasure their eagerness in the pursuit of knowledge, allowed them in a great measure to form their own plan of study. In this way the initial difficulties of arithmetic, geography, the drawing of maps, and astronomy, were conquered with ease; and an affectionate attachment formed between the two students which continued through life.

The elements of mental and physical science being thus acquired, Miss Gibson became capable of farther improvement in attending various public lectures; and she frequently communicated the substance of them to her absent friends, with such judicious remarks as plainly showed how perfectly she comprehended both the arguments and the illustrations of the lecturer.

While it is gratefully acknowledged that Miss Gibson's intellectual powers were the special endowments of Him whose inspiration giveth understanding; it ought to be known that her character was chiefly formed by her judicious mother; and the writer would do an injustice to the memory of that mother, and forget the filial reverence of the daughter, if he did not give prominence to this fact. How well fitted Mrs. Gibson was to form the intellectual

character and habits of her daughter, will be seen from the following sketch, with which I have been favoured by one who knew her well :—

“ Mrs. Gibson was a woman of strong mind, and great decision of character. So much was her judgment relied on, that she was the adviser and counsellor of the circle in which she moved. By constant discipline, she had acquired such a habit of self-denial that she could with ease give up present gratification for the sake of future good. She was remarkable for her strict adherence to truth. Whatever she related might be received without hesitation ; for she was careful never to exaggerate, never to detract, never to mis-state. This important principle she constantly and strenuously impressed upon her children. If any of them said that an event had taken place at one window, which had occurred at another, the error was not suffered to pass uncorrected. Mrs. Gibson was an eminent example of uprightness, order, and punctuality in every transaction. Those hours of the Sabbath which by many are trifled away, she was careful to employ in reading the Scriptures, or works calculated to impart religious instruction. She was always, with her family, to be found in her pew at church before the commencement of the service ; and few persons were less frequently absent. She felt a lively interest in the welfare of her country ; and, as far as became a female, was well acquainted with its concerns. In the frequent discussion of what was commonly called the ‘ Roman Catholic Question,’ she was deeply interested ; ever fearful lest any course might be pursued which should lead to the spread of Popery ; and this anxiety she impressed upon her children. By strict order and punctuality, attention to the more important duties of her house-

hold was never allowed to operate to the neglect of those that might seem comparatively trivial. As a mistress, she was exemplary in the maintenance of strict discipline ; but she was at the same time careful not to oppress her servants with excessive labour ; often observing to her children, ‘ Remember, a servant can feel weariness as much as a mistress.’ ”

For the first ten years of her life, she was the almost constant companion of her mother, by whom she was greatly beloved. Her cleverness rendered her the delight and pride of her mother’s heart. Mrs. Gibson had not much natural fondness for children ; but in Jane she discovered qualities, which a mind like hers could fully appreciate. Perhaps, nothing could be offered more in proof of Jane’s early mental capabilities, than the declaration of her mother : “ Jane is certainly a remarkable child.” The opinion of parents in general on such points, is little to be depended upon ; but they who knew Mrs. Gibson would readily receive her testimony even in reference to her own daughter. Her standard of excellence and superiority was high ; and she would more readily believe that other children had attained, than that her own had reached it.

As a girl Jane was sanguine, energetic, and lively ; yet for the romplings of children she had no taste. She was not fitted for it ; she had little physical strength. But if she was deficient in strength and courage, she had discernment and discretion beyond her years. When quite a child, she had so deep a sense of her responsibility as a rational creature, that she often wished she were a worm, or an insect, on which no such responsibilities rested. She knew the value of time, and saw the importance of improving it. Those hours of relaxation from school-duties, which are usually employed

by children for mere amusement, were by her carefully devoted to the acquisition of useful knowledge; and she early evinced that laudable anxiety to diffuse it, especially among the young of her own sex, which constituted one of the chief employments of her riper years.

John Fenwick, Esq., of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, to whom I am indebted for various observations upon her character, observes in reference to this period of her life :—"I had the happiness of knowing the late Mrs. Gibson from her childhood. When quite a girl, she exhibited a strength of intellect, and a fearlessness in contending with difficult subjects, which used to astonish me. I had extreme pleasure in disputing with her, and in witnessing the growth of that mind which was destined to delight so many friends, and to apply its stores to the complicated cases of difficulty and distress which were to solicit its assistance."

Miss Gibson returned from York, where she completed her education, in the Autumn of the year 1813. She soon turned her attention to the wants of society around her. One of her first benevolent engagements was as a visiter in All-Saints Sunday-school. Here she first met with Miss Milner, with whom she commenced a friendship, sincere, frank, tender, and faithful; and, beyond most friendships, important in its results to herself, to her family, and to the church of God. They found the school a complete chaos, and the professed object of its establishment almost wholly lost sight of. With immense labour and great judgment, they proceeded to re-model it; and had the satisfaction in a short time to see it effecting a large amount of benefit for the children of the poor. On the death of Miss Milner, Jane took the superintendency; and her labours were not only blessed to the

children, but one of the matrons gave satisfactory evidence of her conversion to God. Miss Gibson visited her during her last affliction, which was long-continued; and rejoiced to know that she died in the faith and hope of the Gospel. To this period of her life, she was accustomed to look back with peculiar pleasure; and with gratitude to God for such an opportunity of usefulness. Only a few days before her death, she became acquainted with another instance of her usefulness in that school, in the case of a young woman, who spoke with grateful affection of Miss Gibson's instructions as the means blessed by God to bring her to the knowledge of the truth. "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days."

Under circumstances of great disadvantage, Miss Gibson continued to prosecute her studies, eagerly embracing every opportunity and means of mental cultivation. She read with avidity, but with judgment. Although she could not "separate" herself, yet she greatly "desired," and "sought and inter-meddled with all wisdom." No kind of knowledge was unwelcome to her; nor did she experience much difficulty in the consideration of any ordinary subject of human investigation. She found great pleasure in intellectual philosophy and metaphysics, as occasional studies. An extract of a letter before me, written in 1813, shows that she and an accomplished female friend were then engaged in considering the abstruse question of Liberty and Necessity; and handling that apple of theological discord, the doctrine of personal election. "I have a very clear recollection of our taking a long walk in the country one summer afternoon, when this doctrine became the topic of our conversation. We returned to our house, took a

Bible, and read with deep attention, and without comment, the eighth and ninth chapters of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans ; and came to the conclusion that this portion of Scripture had reference to the special election of Israel as a nation, and not to personal election."

Miss Gibson derived a large measure of mental excitement, and of the purest pleasure, from the society of a long-since deceased brother of one of her beloved friends. He was a young man of decided religious sentiments, and the greatest consistency of life. His mind was highly cultivated and well informed ; and he united the kindest disposition with the greatest firmness and decision. By their intercourse, they sought to perfect themselves in the use of the French language ; and engaged each other in lively intellectual combat, or in grave debate. Whoever reflects on the influence of such associations and engagements in any period of life, but especially when the mind is acquiring that consistency which makes it permanently retain every impression, will feel an interest in Miss Gibson's estimate of this amiable young man, after she had acquired maturity of judgment, and settled principles of religion. He fell a prey to that insatiable enemy of human excellence, consumption, on November 4th, 1820. Jane watched his dying pillow ; and it is remarkable that the last words he uttered were similar to her own last expressions : " All is well ! all is well !"

TO MISS F.

" MY DEAR B.,

" THIS excellent little volume * has afforded me so much pleasure, that I send it to you, assured that

* Memoir of Henry Friend Durant.

it will interest both you and your mother. The amiable character it records, most forcibly reminds me, in every trait, of your excellent brother. An increased acquaintance with human nature does but lead me the more highly to appreciate his worth ; fitter indeed, as our heavenly Father saw, for a celestial than an earthly abode ! Perhaps, he is oftener remembered by me than by most others, except you and your mother ; and certainly, next to you, I knew him best. His equal I never met with ; and I now begin to doubt that I ever shall. Indeed, his whole character, as it revolves before me, whilst I am becoming more able to appreciate it, seems more ideal than real excellence. We shall, I trust, go to him and enjoy his society above, for which I at least was not fit below.

“ Yours ever,

“ J. G.”

The following note exhibits Miss Gibson's more mature opinion of that popular piece of biography. It was written after she experimentally knew “ the truth as it is in Jesus.”

§ “ Durant's Memoir I hope you bear in mind if you have not already had it. As a model for mental education, and the formation of character, I think it excellent. But I almost fear that you will think me hypercritical when I say, that, as a whole, from the pen of an enlightened Minister of the Gospel, I am not satisfied with this Memoir. Highly as I value Mr. Durant's character as manifested in that of his son, I cannot take his or any other man's views of religion further than they accord with the Oracles of God. I approve of his and Mrs. Durant's mode of initiating their dear child into a knowledge of the truth, and of teaching him to pray, and I have no doubt that William

Durant was under the influence of religious principle. But I think we cannot, from the evidence adduced, consider him an established Christian, although his religious character is much eulogized. I had almost said that such an education, such a mind, such outward circumstances, might have produced such a beautiful exhibition of character. However excellent the system in which a child is educated, or however excellent the examples he sees, inherent depravity will exist; and every character, however free from outward evil, must be changed in its propensities and affections, and that by Divine grace alone. This change in such characters may not be visible to the world; they may not discover whence it ariseth, or whither it tendeth; but it must be perceptible to the individual himself; yes, and to those also who have a spiritual discernment, and are afforded opportunity to exercise it. There are some assertions which I believe in the letter, as to his freedom from faults; but as a Christian, though a father, I rather wondered at them from Mr. Durant. In these respects I think the book will do harm, tending to make amiable, cultivated minds think that all is right. They are at all times difficult to convince of sin. But let us beware of departing from the simplicity of the Gospel. Truth, especially truth Divine, will only travel in straight lines, and will not bend to even the most beautiful and graceful undulations. The learned and the unlearned, the pharisee and the publican, a Lydia and a Magdalene, must all, if saved, be saved in the same way."

The following is one of the earliest of her letters that I have met with; and I think it will furnish the reader with a true type of her mind while yet but a girl.

TO MISS M. S.

"Newcastle, October 9th, 1816.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"THE relief that your kind and interesting letter gave to my mind, can only be imagined by those who have felt that sickness of the heart which arises from hope deferred.....I am quite charmed with Miss M. She is not a common character ; but you will find more than common attention necessary to prevent the vivacity of her disposition from degenerating into levity. Even her genius will be a means of increasing the difficulty of your task, though it will bring some delights with it ; yet I could venture to say, that she will require more care in her education, than two ordinary girls. How happy I am, my dear friend, in thinking that such a character has been placed in a situation where her tender mind will be stored with useful knowledge, upon the firm principles of Christianity ! It is for want of that rigid care and attention in directing the young mind to serious things, that we see so many females of bright parts, only remarkable for extraordinary levity ; or, what is still worse, displaying their wit in satirical remarks upon all around them ; nay, who would not miss the opportunity of saying a brilliant thing, even at the expense of their best friend. You will find the duty of repressing her little sallies of wit not of the most pleasing kind ; yet it is highly necessary.

"So you are not exempt from the trouble occasioned by 'amiable weaknesses.' I do not think that in any one point novels have done so much harm as in joining these terms. You are perfectly right in proving to the ladies, that you do not allow of the coalition. The affectation that arises from a supposition that 'fragility is grace,' is incalculable.

“As you endeavour, like Hannah More, to make your pupils consistent and rational in their conduct, you will, I doubt not, inculcate the sentiment, and impress it deeply on their minds, that propriety is to a woman what action is to an orator,—the first, the second, and the third requisite. That maxim has been of great use to me : though I might, perhaps, know it in substance, before I read her work on education, yet it did not recur to my memory so promptly as it does now ; for it sometimes prevents my doing an improper thing.

“There are, as Hannah More observes, few points on which fashion and Christianity agree. That of the necessity of charity is, however, one ; though I think the motives are different. I think, my dear friend, it might be advantageous in procuring you a further knowledge of the dispositions of your pupils, to try how they could make a sacrifice for charity's sake, without any hope of being rewarded for it, otherwise than by the approval of their consciences. To try them separately, I think would be the most certain way of arriving at their sentiments, as young people are so apt to be influenced by each other's actions. Another thing I would take the liberty of mentioning, as you give me a license for making remarks ;—that it will perhaps be advantageous for you never to applaud for the performance of a duty, but only to seem pleased. What we receive praise for, we are sometimes apt to consider as a work of supererogation, and that it therefore might be dispensed with.

“I should be glad, my dear friend, if you would warn against associating with ladies who assume the appearance of kindness to every one, but who have so much duplicity in their composition, that they can ridicule the next moment those whose favour

they have just been endeavouring to secure. Two young ladies, sisters, with whom they are acquainted, I consider of that sort ; and it was to them, in part, that I attributed the decrease of their simplicity. I trust that a religious education will make them really feel that kindness for their fellow creatures, which people of the world, under the notion of politeness, affect, when it suits their interest."

From her infancy, Miss Gibson had a strong conviction that the Bible was the book of God, and the Christian religion the only way to heaven. Her sense of religious obligation increased the more she read the Scriptures ; and after she and her sister returned from school, being then sixteen years of age, she proposed the regular daily reading of the word of God ; and from this time it was also their custom to unite the servants with them in prayer every evening. Though she did not yet know that "by grace we are saved through faith," Divine truth was gradually illuminating the great topics which now began chiefly to occupy her attention. A letter, written at the close of the year 1816, to a highly valued friend, to whom she early disclosed her religious feelings, and to whom she ever acknowledged her great obligations, exhibits a serious and anxious feeling after God, if haply she might find him.

After expressing her sense of her religious advantages, and her unfaithfulness in reference to them, she says she had "often desired holiness, yet doubted whether she had ever earnestly pursued it;" but hoped she was now "more steadfast and earnest in her longings after it." She complains of pride and vanity, and deploras her want of patience and self-denial ; and adds,—

“ Now I entreat to be informed how I may bring my mind into such a state as to be able to do a good thing without vanity, or considering what the world will think of it ; and how I may attain that grand Christian principle, humility. This is a sad catalogue, yet it is by no means the whole ; but at present I shall add no more, lest I should make you suppose that I have more self-knowledge than I really have. When these evils are corrected, it will be time enough to tell you more. Did I not believe you to be a Christian, a fellow-labourer with me, I should not have addressed you in this manner ; as otherwise you could not be a judge of my trials. I also think it necessary to inform you, though it is little to my credit, that it is but lately that I have begun to read the Scriptures daily.

“ You have now, my dear friend, received a pretty clear statement of my case, which I hope will enable you to prescribe proper remedies. After all, I think it but right to say, that I have never yet felt the burden of sin so intolerable as I have read of many persons doing. I have frequently deferred searching my own heart, from a consciousness that the search would not be productive of satisfaction ; and even in my prayers I have asked for grace and strength to resist temptation, and pardon for sin in general, purposely avoiding to mention particular vices, lest I should be compelled to see the reality of my state.”

This letter is distinguished by great frankness ; and, as exhibiting the first results of a daily perusal of the word of God, may afford encouragement to those, who, like Miss Gibson, with many religious advantages, much general information, and true sobriety of character, are yet but partially instructed in the things of God. Such will perceive that whether the earlier

stages of a work of grace be marked by the predominance of a fear of wrath, or by a desire to be delivered from the power of sin, one course is pursued by all who do not see the way of faith ; they uniformly aim at self-righteousness in order to justification ; they seek holiness in order to, and as the ground of, acceptance with God ; and they also seek that holiness as an attainment within the reach of their own efforts, by self-discipline, the cultivation of particular virtues, and improved general obedience. They earnestly desire deliverance from particular vices and evils ; but suppose that each may be attacked and destroyed by appropriate means,—by antagonist forces,—by the same gradual process in which error is eradicated, and truth grafted in its stead. Miss Gibson fell into the error of thousands equal to herself in general religious knowledge, and of many even superior to her in the power of discerning such truths as the natural man may perceive ; she mistook the symptoms of the disorder for the disorder itself ; and as yet knew not that there is no remedy for particular evils of the heart, but an entire renewal. By a severe mental and moral discipline, some crooked branches may be cut off, others may be more exactly trained, and the whole tree may become more fair and beautiful than in its wildest form of unchecked depravity : but the root must be made good before the fruit can be truly good, in the sight of Him who estimates actions by their principles. “ If the root be holy, so are the branches.” “ For we ourselves also,” says St. Paul to Titus, “ were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righ-

teousness which we have done, but according to His mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

That ardent love and zeal for the truth which were early planted in Miss Gibson's mind grew with her growth, and strengthened with her strength. Her deep concern lest any should err and be deceived, made her watch the progress of all those especially who were not yet grounded in the truth. The consciousness of her ignorance respecting many things, did not unsettle her mind respecting what she had once been convinced was true. She had too much fortitude of understanding to be thus deceived, or shaken in her convictions. But about this time she was surprised, if not shocked, by what appeared to her a novel hypothesis,—that "it is impossible that all mankind should have sprung from one pair." Some friend with whom she corresponded had read an essay in support of this notion, and pronounced the arguments to be incontrovertible. She instantly saw that such an opinion sapped the foundation of all religion, by excluding the Scripture doctrine of the fall and universal corruption of man. She became fearful for the consequences upon the mind of her correspondent; and immediately applied to those of her friends, whom she judged able to direct her to such books or arguments as might disprove this specious hypothesis. It was her misfortune not to see the Essay itself, but only a few extracts; yet she soon, either from the Scriptures, the resources of her own mind, or from the contributions which she levied upon her friends, replied to every argument that was

adduced. Believing it to be a question which affected vital truth, she was in great earnest; and did not rest till she had become the means of expelling the insinuating poison, which she saw was calculated to overthrow her correspondent's belief in the authenticity of the Christian and Mosaic Scriptures. She was greatly indebted to a passage, which may be found in Stillingfleet's "*Origines Sacrae*," book iii. c. 4.,* on returning which extract to her friend, she says,—

"I find it much easier to defend truth, than I expected. My mind was in a sad chaos when I wrote my last. I had been threatened with such powerful opponents; and, being totally ignorant of their real strength, imagination had greatly magnified their powers. How difficult it is to support falsehood!"

This little effort on behalf of the truth was attended with success; and she wisely availed herself of the opportunity, to urge her correspondent to the consideration of those powerful and unanswerable arguments in defence of Revelation, which, proving its truth, might also prove that there is no sound philosophy where the statements of Scripture are oppugned and denied. As the late Richard Watson says, "True theology is always true philosophy; and where the theology is bad, the philosophy will ever be vain." Miss Gibson had learned to make her final appeal to the Scriptures; and in all matters to which the truths of Revelation could be applied, it was an undisputed axiom with her, that Scripture, and Scripture alone, is the standard of opinion and practice with all Christians.

* The reader will find a beautiful and conclusive chapter on this subject, in Dr. Mason Good's "*Book of Nature*," vol. ii. sect. 3.

Miss Gibson's correspondence through this period, exhibits a growing dissatisfaction with her religious state; an intense thirst after scriptural and saving knowledge; and, with a faithful improvement of her time, an anxiety to make every thing tributary to her best interests. A kind friend had lent her "Scott's Essays," his "Force of Truth," &c., and in correspondence, had directed her to many suitable portions of Scripture, which were made a great blessing to her. For the spiritual perception of those who truly love God, and are taught of him, qualifies them to show to others the way of God more perfectly. But Miss Gibson was compelled to make sad lamentation over her spiritual poverty. She wrote bitter things against herself, and deeply deplored the evils she knew not how to remedy. With perfect sincerity, she under-estimated the work of grace begun in her heart; for the discovery of greater things prepared for her in the Gospel made her almost deny the gifts of God already vouchsafed. She maintained a conflict against sin; but because she did not gain the entire victory, she forgot or overlooked the fact, that the power to fight at all, the very desire to overcome and dispossess the strong man armed, was a gracious gift of God, demanding grateful acknowledgment, and encouraging the hope of larger communications. A few miscellaneous extracts will illustrate these remarks.

"Indeed, I greatly want your prayers, my dear M., for my progress in religion is not perceptible. I much fear that I shall rank among those who are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. I have much of the form of godliness, but none of the power. The love of the world reigns uncontrolled in my heart. I read the Scriptures, though not half so much as I ought. Yet the Bible is, per-

haps, the book that leaves the slightest traces in my memory. Is it not surprising, that, acknowledging and feeling as I do, the importance of salvation, I should be so very slow and apathetic in my endeavours after, and attendance upon, the appointed means, especially as all the affections of my heart are ardent?

“Now my dear M., do not fancy that I have given you the worst side of my character ; for that is by no means the case ; and I should be sorry if you formed any delusive estimate of my character, temper, and attainments, which might mislead your judgment in advising me how to act. I do really think, and I trust I am not mistaken, that I feel humble and willing to learn in any way ; though I am often tempted to think that I shall never know the truth as it is in Jesus.” She admitted, however, that naturally she had a great aversion to being taught by those whose education was inferior to her own ; and observes, in one of her letters : “I regret this fastidiousness, and trust that as I grow in grace, I shall be enabled to conquer it.” Again, she says, “I have just opened my Bible at these words, which I think furnish an answer to some of my questions in the foregoing pages. ‘For my people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.’ Jer. ii. 13. This is exactly my case. I endeavour to find happiness in any thing but God. I never seek Him, till my spirit is wearied and disappointed in the pursuit of some fancied good. But then I am sinning with my eyes open. The whole of that chapter applies to me exactly. It is the first I have felt for a long time. Pray for me, my dear friend!”

Miss Gibson’s mind had long been exercised in reference to the propriety of making a public profes-

sion of her Christianity, by partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The usual fears which haunt the consciences of sincere inquirers after the truth, disturbed her. She was afraid of doing it "unworthily;" misconceiving, with many, the apostle's meaning, who refers to improprieties in the celebration of that ordinance which our modern practices exclude. The Corinthians made it a carnal feast; and each endeavoured to rush indecently before his brother, coming only to eat and to drink, and not to a holy sacrament, not discerning, not reverently regarding, the Lord's body. This eating and drinking "unworthily," brought condemnation, that is, judgment, a judicial visitation of sickness and death, upon offending communicants; and liability to eternal death. A preparation of mind and heart is every way desirable; not as constituting worthiness, but as helpful to faith, that we may so eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, as to discern the Lord's body, and feast upon the sacrifice.

On Dec. 25th, 1817, Miss Gibson observes, "I have been enabled this day to make a public profession of faith; and I thank my God that he has spared me during so many procrastinations. After all, I was ill-prepared. God grant that my soul may be strengthened and refreshed by this participation in the body and blood of Christ. In the early part of this morning's service, I felt deeply: my heart seemed alive to devotion. I felt the abundant love of God in sending his beloved and only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and to die for a guilty world. Short-lived were those precious feelings! Soon did my heart begin to wander to the ends of the earth; and I could only lament afresh its deceitfulness." This means of grace moved her most tender feelings,

and inspired her with delightful religious sentiments, but did not yet bring to her conscience the assurance, "He loved me, and gave himself for me."

Miss Gibson continued to avail herself of every means of improving her mind, and especially of increasing her religious information. Her valued friend, Miss S——, was herein a most important auxiliary; and any works, new or old, which she wished her to read, were procured and read with the greatest avidity. Spencer's Life was especially profitable to her. "In the short space of twenty years, he had fulfilled the grand purpose of being, which so many never think of in threescore and ten years." This transient meteor was probably created, and quenched so mysteriously in darkness, chiefly for the purpose of calling the attention of Christian Ministers to the great, the imperative necessity of eminent piety, and habitual preparedness for death; and it will perhaps be found hereafter, that the sudden and awful removal of this eminent youthful Minister carried home lessons to the minds of survivors which no other event could have done; and blessings may have distilled upon the church, infinitely superior to those which could have been derived from Spencer's lengthened years and most eminent usefulness.

About a month after her first attendance on the Lord's supper, Miss Gibson again partook of those sacred emblems, and with a richer blessing. "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways." "On Sunday last," she observes to a friend, "I received the Lord's supper, and found it a refreshing ordinance. On Monday I retired to rest, in the most comfortable state of mind I have ever known. It was the first time in my life when I felt as though I could have

died without fear ; I had such a lively hope in God's mercy through Christ. Pray for me, my dear friend, that I may be preserved from presumptuous sins ; and that I may not deceive myself. Since then, I have been very dead ; yet the remembrance of those happy moments sheds a gleam of light upon my path."

In the Autumn of 1818, Miss Gibson accompanied her father to London. The visit was a source of great pleasure, and was improved to the most advantageous purposes. Writing to her early friend, she gives an account of hearing different ministers on the Sabbath, and of some of the impressions she received on this her first visit to the metropolis.

"We arrived at St. Mary Aldermary's, just as Mr. Wilkinson was commencing one of the best sermons I ever heard. With what force and eloquence did he plead the cause of Christ ; such feeling appeals, such affectionate entreaty, such faithful warnings ! He is an old man, and his preaching appeared to me more moving, from the circumstance of his appearing to be just on the verge of eternity. He preached extempore to a very crowded audience. Surely if these turn not from their wicked way, their blood will be upon their own heads, for he has delivered his soul. We went to St. Mary Woolnoth in the evening, where we heard a very excellent discourse. Perhaps my feelings on entering the field of Mr. Newton's labours were more poignant than at any other period of my stay in London, except when I first cast my eye upon his monument. What an inscription ! It stands near the altar ; and is only a plain column of marble. A little to the left of it, near the altar, we observed, after most of the congregation had retired, a gentleman kneeling, in the attitude of prayer, who did not rise whilst we staid. He

was not in a pew, and really interested me greatly. There was no possibility of learning who he was. Your sister saw him in the same spot and attitude on a former Sunday. Could some beloved relative rest on that spot? I relate this apparently trifling incident, because I know it to be precisely one of those things which you will enter into as I do.

"I have just received your very welcome note. Who can make a little scrap so sweet and acceptable as my own M.? You ask, what were my feelings on entering the great metropolis? I think they were like the metropolis itself—a confused *mélange*. Every possible feeling seemed to rise at once as I landed at Blackfriars' Bridge. It is indefinable. We took a boat at Gravesend; I am informed that the most advantageous mode of entering London is by water. I shall not descant upon any thing I saw. You have already seen most of what is remarkable. Suffice it to say, that I was abundantly gratified. I should like to see it now and then, but not to live there.

"I was much, very much delighted with Mr. West's pictures. I was, if possible, more delighted with a fine painting by Le Thier, 'The Judgment of Brutus.' But Westminster Abbey! With what indescribable awe did I enter the mansion where rest the ashes of so many of the mighty dead! You can imagine it. Do you remember a beautiful monument by Roubilliac, representing a lady in the arms of her husband, suddenly struck by Death, who is issuing out of a charnel-house below them, with one foot in the tomb, launching a dart at the lady, in whose countenance no feeling is observable but resignation; whilst her husband, with one arm round her, and with the other attempting to ward off the blow, seems transfixed with horror? That rivetted my attention;

and I afterwards learnt it is Roubilliac's. How did my heart swell when I contemplated the plain monuments of many of our great poets ! But why am I dilating upon what you have already seen and felt ? I must, however, just add, that for chastity, simplicity, and elegance of design, I prefer the monument of the immortal Nelson to any other of our warriors or statesmen. A tear involuntarily started in my eye as I viewed it, which all the laboured imagery of many other magnificent memorials failed to produce. It is in St. Paul's.

“ My journey was like other journeys until I arrived at York. There we spent seventeen hours. There my mind wandered over scenes gone by, and recalled circumstances lost but to memory. I entered the cathedral. My heart was full. Might I say, it seems almost worthy to be the entrance into another world ? No building I ever saw is to be compared to the interior of it. I found it ten times more beautiful than I expected. Its painted windows, through which the rays of the setting sun then beamed ; its lofty arches ; the deep tones of the organ ; all conspired to awaken the most thrilling emotions. My soul feasted in silence. ‘ Perhaps I may never see it more,’ thought I, as I returned through the porch. That idea alone gives an interest to objects in themselves trivial ; how much more to York cathedral !

“ The rest of my journey had no remarkable circumstance, except that there was in the coach a gentleman who had spent eight months in Paris, and was just returned from thence, going for a short time to Edinburgh, and intending to winter in Italy. A delightful companion ; told me so much about Paris, that when I got home I was more overflowing with news from Paris than London.”

CHAPTER II.

Miss Gibson earnestly seeks Religion—Death of Miss Milner—Her own Account of her past Life—Records her Conversion—Letters to Miss M. S.—Extracts from other Letters on Justification—First hears the Wesleyan Methodists—Anecdote of the Rev. Legh Richmond—Letter to Miss M. S.—Extracts from her Diary.

WE now reach the most important period in the life of Miss Gibson,—the time when, by a hearty faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour, she received a full divine persuasion of her being an adopted child of God. This blessed spiritual transaction between God and her soul, was the hinge of her future life. New and divine principles were now to operate with transforming, undivided, and increasing energy upon her whole character. Outward fruits, meet for repentance, she had long cultivated and manifested, so that the effect of this great change would be but partially discovered by others; but morality and good works were now to become vital, from her union with Christ. From this period she dated her enjoyment of religion. She had served God carefully with humility and many tears; she had experienced a deep sense of the corruption of her heart; and had occasionally much comfort in dwelling upon the facts and promises of the Gospel, as exhibiting, generally, the love of God to man. Some of the drawings of the Father, of which we have seen her records, were very powerful and consolatory; but whether she ever attained to a clear sense of forgiving mercy, and the knowledge of her adoption, her own comparative ignorance of the nature of such blessings prevents our

ascertaining. Certain it is, that if she had ever known that Christ indeed "loved *her*, and gave himself for *her*," she had lost the blessed consolation ; and it is equally certain that she was not accustomed to look any farther back than the period we are now entering, as the time of her conversion to God. With desire she had desired to enjoy the full blessedness of the righteous,—those to whom the Lord will not impute sin ; and it may be profitable to trace the means and steps by which she was led to embrace Christ as her wisdom and justification, her sanctification and redemption.

The event which appears to have been the most immediate, if not the most powerful, means of stirring up Miss Gibson's mind to greater earnestness in pursuit of saving religion, was the death of a dear and highly-valued friend, Miss Milner, with whom, it will be remembered, she first became acquainted at the Sunday-school.

Miss Milner's death took place Dec. 17th, 1818, exactly two months after they had mutually agreed to keep a journal of their mode of spending time, and of the state of their hearts ; a practice which some of the most distinguished saints have found to be highly promotive of their spiritual interests. The death of this young lady was somewhat sudden and unexpected, and the shock to Miss Gibson was proportionably great. The following letter bears marks of her exquisite grief, both in the tone of the letter, the broken sentences, and, in the original, in the numerous stains of "tears which bring relief" to the swoln and sorrowful heart. Miss G. was not in a state of mind to do more than announce an event which sank deep into her tender and affectionate spirit ; but the letter does honour to her feelings.

TO MISS S.

" *Newcastle, Dec. 17th, 1818.*

" THOUGH I expect my dear M. next week, yet I cannot help writing to pour my sorrows into her bosom. Yet it is the hand of the Lord, and why should I grieve? My dear Miss Milner entered into rest yesterday night, at half-past ten o'clock. You perhaps have not heard of her illness; it began since I wrote to you. Three weeks yesterday I brought her home from the Clothing Society, *well*; that night she became ill. It proved to be typhus. An hemorrhage came on. She died last night. She never could see any one, not even Mr. W. or Mr. T. I always had my information of her state direct from the family, and always got a favourable report, till yesterday I heard she was past hope! What a shock! This morning I heard of her death! She is happy, but we mourn! Those lament her who only knew her by report; what must I do? We took sweet counsel together; we talked of divine things; we loved each other. I believe she was ripe for glory,—for she lived near to God. Mr. Wawn says he never knew any one make such rapid advances in Christianity.

* * * I shall now have but one motive in going to the Sunday-school. O may I serve the Lord with a single heart! Pray for me that I may be prepared—may be ready; for perhaps it may be my turn next. She was remarkably strong. Little did I think, in parting with her, that I was the last person she would ever be out with. A few Sundays ago, she fainted at chapel, from heat. She told me she thought it was death; she had never fainted before; but she felt no anxiety. She had peace with God. Happy, happy girl!—I hope it will be sanctified to me. O may I tread in her steps!"

This world becomes more vacant and vain, whatever riches or honours it may proffer, when the friend is removed whose presence gave the charm, and doubled the relish and enjoyment of life. The lesson of our own mortality comes home with great power, when "lover and friend are put far from us, and our acquaintance into darkness;" uncertainty is then more visibly stamped on all terrestrial good. Such afflictions serve to make the heart soft to a degree beyond the power of other means. Even the externals of Christianity, at such times, soothe and heal the wounded spirit; a fact which even the most dissolute and hardened acknowledge by seeking them in the time of sorrow and affliction. Could the friends of Miss Milner have looked forward but a few years or months, and traced some of the moral results of her sudden removal, they would have found that there is "joy in grief." She was taken away from the evil to come; but her fall was to be the rising of many. In reference to Miss Gibson, the event was fraught with blessing.

About this time a correspondence commenced between her and Mr. Wawn, for the purpose of spiritual edification; and this proved to be a link in the chain of means employed by God for her salvation. The following are some of her melancholy reflections upon the state of her heart:—

"I seem desirous of doubting what I believe to be true. Religion is no joy to me. When I read the Scriptures,—which, alas! is not near so much as I ought,—it is as a dry, tedious task. The chapters in Isaiah you mentioned, I read. I found them beautiful; but, alas! they conveyed no comfort to me; they did not come home to my heart. In short, sometimes I think I may just give up, for I am quite lost. The world has fast hold of my heart; my

affections are on things below: I feel a deadness to all spiritual enjoyments. Often do I wish and pray for a heart of flesh. Pride and vanity, especially the latter, are my besetting sins. Unfortunately I enjoy so much temporal happiness, that I am apt to forget, in the fulness of the stream, the Source from which it emanates. Does there need any other proof of the weakness and wickedness of human nature than this,—that in the abundance of good we forget the Giver? Indeed, my dear friend, your hints about the manner of asking gifts in prayer were very necessary to me. I have often said, ‘Lord, I will become thy servant;’ or, in praying for deliverance from any temporary grief, ‘Lord, I will in future serve only Thee;’ never reflecting that I was making my service the condition of my receiving! How often may I ask pardon for the sins of my holy things!”

On the 24th of January Miss Gibson attended on the blessed ordinance of the Lord’s supper, and in answer to many prayers, found it a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The next day, a valued friend and her spiritual adviser put “Fletcher’s Address” into her hands, the reading of which had a most gracious influence,—both quickening her desires and enlivening her hopes. The state of her mind, immediately before she obtained the unspeakable blessing of pardon and acceptance with God, will be best seen in her own statements. Her concern about salvation now amounted to that anxiety which ought to be the habitual state of all sinners, and is the sure attendant of that real and deep repentance which leads to Christ as our only hope. On Wednesday morning, the day of her spiritual deliverance,—of emancipation from the prison of condemnation and the chains of guilt,—she wrote, in a note to a

friend, a short survey of her whole life in reference to religion;—a method well calculated, in any case, to deepen conviction of sin, and compel the soul, from a sense of pressing danger, to fly to her only refuge. I insert the most material parts of Miss Gibson's account of herself, not merely as a specimen of her candour and faithfulness, but chiefly as exhibiting her increased anxiety respecting salvation, and the prepared state of her mind for the reception of that gospel mercy which she experienced at the close of the day on which it was written.

“ With feelings of deep humiliation I confess that religious impressions were graciously vouchsafed to me at a very early age. The first remarkable ones I remember, were when I could not be above four or five years of age, under a sermon preached to children on an Easter Monday, in the Orphan House, to which I was taken by a lady now an ornament to the Methodist Society. I remember then weeping at the relation of a Saviour's sufferings for sinners, which, when reason was more matured, I have frequently heard recounted with indifference. These impressions, however, in time wore off, as I probably did not, for many years afterwards, hear any sermon that I could understand; and though I was occasionally blessed with the instructions of the lady before mentioned, yet the wickedness of my heart prevented any permanent effects from resulting. And though I have at times, ever since hearing that sermon, been the subject of repeated and often powerful convictions; yet my good resolutions, being made in my own strength, were like the morning cloud, and like the early dew which goeth away. And here I cannot omit remarking that though the period I have been describing was but childhood, yet my sins were

not the consequence of childish heedlessness, but of premeditated wickedness. I was always a thinking being, fond of reading, and not delighting in the common amusements of my age. This rendered me more accountable. I then knew all this; yet I went on, stifling conviction, and quenching the Spirit of God. In this manner I lived, until, in my fifteenth year, I was sent to finish my education at York; and there I even lost the little grace I had. It was a fashionable school; to be fitted for shining in the gay world was the grand object there. The form of religion was attended to, as a thing necessary to be got over; but its spirit was never thought of. The only two times I ever was at the theatre were at York; yet with all the charms of novelty it failed to delight me. The still small voice of conscience disturbed my enjoyment. I was miserable, and sat in expectation that judgment would overtake me in the very commission of the sin. Even as an amusement, it did not suit my taste; and, I thank God, I have never seen a play performed since.

“I was now out of reach of the kind friend whose admonitions had been so useful to me; and the impression of guilt soon was erased from my mind. Pride was my besetting sin at that time, and much of its power is yet unsubdued. About four years ago I was introduced to a slight knowledge of Scott’s writings, from which, especially his ‘Force of Truth,’ I derived considerable religious instruction. Since then, I may in a peculiar manner be said to have sinned against conviction; but I have lived on, endeavouring to reconcile two services which I now find irreconcilable—that of God and the world.

“O that I had been humble and willing to learn that from the word of God, without my own painful

and sinful experience. The mercies that have been bestowed upon me in the way of Christian friends alone, are incredible, and my iniquity is unbounded. I omitted to mention, that about the time of my return from school, I was introduced to the family of Mr. William Smith. To him I have unbounded obligations; he has long treated me as a daughter; but even his admonitions I have slighted; and yet I am spared! Was ever grace so manifested?

“I might tell of many more signal mercies, mercies boundless as my sins; but I should weary you: to recount them all would be impossible. Nearly two years ago, I became acquainted, under the Divine blessing, with Miss Milner. Her life was useful to me; her death how much more so! The Almighty in his infinite wisdom saw that nothing less would bring me to Him, and render me willing to be saved in His way. That has in some measure brought me to a sense of my lost estate, and given me a humbling view of my own depravity, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin. May the same power give me deeper and deeper humility, that I may have a sight of my own utter unworthiness!

“It is now about sixteen years since I heard the sermon before alluded to, during which time I may surely be said to have been always learning, yet never coming to a knowledge of the truth. For the last three years I have been seeking to enter in at the strait gate, and have not been able. I now begin to feel that I must pray for grace to be more in earnest to strive to enter in. I never until now felt willing to give my whole heart to God. I always made a reserve for the world. I am now ready to ask, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ and humbly and sincerely desirous to be taught.”

Here we have an affecting picture of a deep and thorough repentance, attended, however, with a humbling view of her ingratitude to the Best of Beings, the God of love, rather than a tormenting apprehension of Divine wrath :—marked rather by abasement of soul for secret and heart-sin, and habitual indifference to religion,—than by the pungent guilt of outward transgressions. Miss Gibson dwelt chiefly upon the corruption of her heart, of which she had now that deep experimental conviction which corroborated her doctrinal views, made her strongly to desire “a clean heart,” and willing to lie at the feet of Christ, and “weep her life away, for having grieved His love.” “He that does not deeply repent, sets his heart upon some secret sin ; though perhaps he thinks he does not. But he that deeply repents, desires to be delivered from every evil to which he feels his heart so strongly and unhappily enslaved. He that only superficially repents, endeavours to find a thousand excuses ; but he cannot satisfy his conscience without parting with his beloved evil. The reason why so many remain repenting sinners so long, is this : God will not justify them until they are more deeply in earnest ; and the carnal mind is very averse to earnestness of spirit.”

This earnestness Miss Gibson had now attained by following, instead of resisting the Holy Ghost ; and, instead of averting her eyes from the painful discovery of what she had been doing in the chambers of imagery, in obedience to the voice of God she turned yet again, and was given to see yet greater abominations. Although it was now the depth of winter, she had begun to rise earlier, in order to secure more time for devotion ; and thus she “waited in the way, for Christ the heavenly Light.”

On the evening of Wednesday, the 27th of January, she appears to have retired to her room full of the meltings of a broken heart; and resolved at once and fully to pour out her heart before God, and to venture her soul upon those precious promises of salvation and peace, which are laid upon the mercy-seat for the comfort of all who come by Christ, the living way into the holiest. She looked not, however, for pardon, but only for the joy of grief; not to be put among the children, but to be permitted to kiss his feet. But "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are His ways higher than our ways, and His thoughts than our thoughts."

The following records in her too-brief journal, refer to the affecting, delightful, and instructive event, which closed her long night of legal fears, and ushered in that heavenly "light, which shone more and more unto the perfect day."

"Jan. 27th, 1819.—Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, bless His holy name! I have this day been enabled by grace to feel that I have an interest in the blessings of redemption; this day been practically taught that God is love, unbounded love. O God, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. Lord, uphold me! for without Thee I can do nothing!

"Jan. 29th.—O my God, I thank Thee that I now feel that 'there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' I bless and adore Thy holy name for all I have enjoyed this day. Thou hast taken me out of the horrible pit of unbelief. O may I wait continually upon Thee! Praised be the Lord!"

How truly has our poet, Charles Wesley, described this blessed state of Christian experience:—

"The guiltless shame, the sweet distress,
The unutterable tenderness;
The genuine, meek humility:
The wonder, 'Why such love to me!'"

On the same day she wrote as follows to her esteemed and faithful friend,

MISS M. S.

"MY OWN DEAR MARIA,

"You have often listened with patience and compassion to my sorrows; and shall you not participate in my joys? Yes, my dear M., 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.' He has now 'lifted up the light of his countenance upon me, and given me peace;' and well has it been described as 'passing all understanding.' Truly may I say, The half has not been told me. I now am enabled to believe on Him with all my heart. I have been brought to the foot of His cross; I have there laid the whole burden of my sins, which was too heavy for me to bear, and I have found rest unto my soul. Surely he is a God that heareth prayer, for while I was yet speaking, He answered. Well might the psalmist say, 'Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.' My heart is full, my dear M.; it is full of things that cannot be uttered. 'God is love.' Pray for me, my M., that I may continue to live in Him, and He in me; that I may rely continually upon His strength, that He may support me. And may I be kept humble! May I ever remember the horrible pit out of which I have been taken! May I see daily and hourly more of my own unworthiness, and more of the freeness of His grace! Grace indeed!

"I now feel as if I could 'do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' I now love Him above all things: He reigns in my heart; all things

are put under his feet. O may He reign there for ever! The Scriptures, which were before sealed, are now open; all things are now mine! I have long felt a degree of comfort in thinking that I was seeking to enter in at the strait gate; but since my dear Miss Milner's death, I have been enabled to strive; and joy and peace now fill my heart. I have wrestled like Jacob, 'and prevailed.'

"I have great obligations to you. You have led me gently. Your letters have often been the means of bringing my wandering heart back to God. He can abundantly repay. My Saviour has satisfied the demands of the law; and He will, I trust, discharge my obligations to you.

"My dear M., I have still trials; but they vanish before the bright light that shines within me. My dear Mr. Smith is very weak. Last Friday evening when I was there, I was overcome with the thought that he was about to leave me. Once more I knelt before him: once more I received his blessing. His prayers ascended to heaven: they are answered: blessed be God! 'God is love.' My cares are all cast upon Him. He will do what is best. Farewell.

"Yours, most affectionately,

"JANE GIBSON."

In reply to a note from Miss S., requesting a more full and circumstantial account of this most joyous change, that she might more deeply adore the grace of God, and more distinctly and joyfully bless God for the consolation, Miss Gibson writes, February 9th:—

"I have little more to tell. There was no outward exciting cause; no one passage of Scripture in

particular was impressed upon my mind. It was an answer graciously vouchsafed to fervent prayer. Since the removal of my dear Miss Milner, I have been greatly exercised about divine things. The evening after her death, perhaps the first time from the bottom of my heart, I entreated the Lord earnestly, and in great bitterness and deep humiliation, that He would make me wholly devoted to Him ; that He would ' create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.' Since then I have been enabled to pour out my heart in prayer, and have waited upon Him with more earnestness than formerly, and have searched the Scriptures more than heretofore. In this way I went on mourning for my sins, praying for the influences of the Holy Ghost, and feeling a degree of hope.

"On Sunday, the 24th ult., I received the Lord's supper, with earnest prayer that it might prove a refreshing ordinance. On the Monday and Tuesday, I felt considerable liberty in prayer. On the Monday I received from Mr. Wawn an invaluable little book, ' Fletcher's Address to earnest Seekers of Salvation ;' and had read a few pages in it with much comfort ; when, on Wednesday evening, whilst pleading the promises in prayer, I felt my unbelief removed, and my heart filled with joy and peace. My Saviour convinced me that my crimes were not too numerous to be washed away by His blood. Like the satisfied apostle, I was then ready to exclaim, ' My Lord and my God.' I then read the remainder of the little work alluded to, every sentence of which seemed to strengthen my faith. I felt no doubt : all was peace. My heart overflowed with love and gratitude, and its feelings could not be uttered. The Scripture seemed a new book. In His abundant mercy, He gave me

more, far more, than I asked. I never hoped nor expected such a revelation. But His ways are not as our ways, neither His thoughts as our thoughts. Pray for me, my dear M., that I may be kept humble, by having continually before me the depravity and deceitfulness of my own heart, and the holiness, truth, and justice of the law of God; that my faith may evidence its genuineness by its fruits; that I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things. Surely she ought to love much to whom much has been forgiven.

“Since receiving your note I have read several of Scott’s Essays, and with prayer have endeavoured to try the spirit. I have no doubt of its being divine. Indeed, my M., I was little likely to fall into such an error at the time the Lord graciously showed me His salvation, as I was in no expectation of such a manifestation of love; but rather desiring deeper sorrow for sin, than hoping to be anointed with the oil of gladness. Yet the Lord, whose name is Love, was pleased to look upon my poverty, and bestow upon me the riches of grace.

“My dear M., watch over me; warn me; remind me, when you think I am resting in present attainments, that there is no standing still in religion.

“My dear love, tell me all things respecting the state of your soul. Let me hear how the Lord is dealing with you. Let us pray for each other, that we may be renewed daily in the image of Christ, and may have more light and power to enjoy His love and communion.”

All experienced Christians will perceive in these extracts the language of a babe in Christ. It is true the above statement does not make that full

reference that might be wished to the instrumental cause of justification, faith in the blood of Christ ; which faith is the ordained condition of justification, not as a test of humility; and because man fell by unbelief, nor as containing the seed of all graces, which are but refinements of the doctrine of justification by works, but because it was previously necessary that man should be redeemed by the blood of Christ, and, *therefore*, trust in that atonement is necessary to salvation. But that Miss Gibson did really regard that satisfaction as the only ground of trust for salvation, and the promises springing out of that atonement as the only encouragement and warrant of evangelical hope, is manifest from other statements, which will now be laid before the reader.

When writing to one on whom she urged the pursuit of all the privileges of the Gospel, she observes :

“ THE season of gracious visitation to me is written with indelible characters on my heart ; and the review of it has often refreshed and encouraged me when faith was weak, or love growing cold, or temptation fierce. The spot on which I received it is sacred in my eyes. There, whilst mourning under a sense of my sinfulness ; and, in my ignorance of Christian privileges, praying that I might be kept mourning at the foot of the cross all my days ; whilst this prayer was on my lips, I felt my burden of sin taken away ; a new existence opened upon me ; my spirit rejoiced in God my Saviour. I could truly say,

‘ My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and follow’d Thee.’

Lord Jesus, may I ever follow Thee whithersoever
Thou goest !

"I knew not then what justification was, but I believed this was a work of God; yet I knew not whether ever another had experienced such an one. Immediately Satan would have persuaded me that it was all a delusion; but the Lord enabled me to hold fast whereunto I had attained, until I compared my experience with Mr. Fletcher's clear, scriptural, and experimental account of it in his 'Address to such as inquire, What shall I do to be saved?' every sentence of which agreed with and confirmed my experience. I can express what I felt in no way so well as, 'Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.' The 'Address' had been sent to me two days before by dear Mr. Wawn. Mark here the hand of the Lord. It was a great blessing to me."

It is no wonder that this little tract, which has been made a blessing to thousands, was ever after a great favourite with her. She recommended it constantly, and distributed it freely in after-years, to all especially whom she perceived to be under serious concern for their souls' welfare.

Some time after this important event, she thus expresses herself when writing to a highly-valued friend:—

"I AM, indeed, thankful that you deeply feel yourself a sinner. This is the first step towards salvation. Press onward; 'stay not in all the plain;' flee to the city of refuge. Believe, and enter into rest. Pray much for living faith; that mighty faith which appropriates the promises of pardon through the blood of Christ. This is what you want. Defer not. You can never be more needy, never more fit

for receiving the blessing. Be earnest in prayer, and ever expecting to receive it. The moment that you do indeed cast your burden of sin and unbelief at the foot of the cross, in that moment you will know that 'there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' Yesterday evening brought to my mind the blessed recollection of that season in which the Lord spoke peace to my distressed and contrite spirit. Seven years have elapsed since then ; yet the memory of it is as vivid and as precious as if it were but yesterday. I thank God that he has kept me during that period generally 'walking in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.' "

Somewhat out of its chronological order, an extract from a letter, written about eighteen months after her conversion, is here introduced, on account of its reference to her previous state, and to the struggle it cost her, to cast herself wholly on Christ by faith alone :—

"BEFORE we can make any real attainment in spiritual wisdom, it is necessary that we should be brought to prize it above every other attainment ; to count all things but loss that we may win it. This is a difficult lesson, and can only be taught by Him who hath all the treasures of wisdom ; and He does it by first convincing us deeply of our own foolishness and helplessness, and making us feel that without Him we can do nothing. He then brings us to a sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin in general, and of our own sinfulness in particular ; and also of sorrow for our particular sins. Pray much for this, my dear friend ; be very earnest with God to give you a view of your own heart, that you may rest no longer in clear views of the depravity of human

nature ; but may feel your own as you have never yet felt it. Endeavour to gain clearer light on the spirituality of the law of God, and a deeper sense of the sinfulness of want of love to it, and to its holy Author. ‘The law,’ says the apostle, ‘is our school-master to bring us to Christ.’ ‘By the law is the knowledge of sin.’ In it, as in a glass, we behold our deformity. When we lay our ways to the straight and undeviating line it furnishes, we perceive their obliquity ; and never until we are enlightened by the Spirit of God to see and feel all this, and are fully convinced that there is no other hope or refuge from the storm of God’s wrath, shall we flee to Christ. This light, and teaching, and grace of the Holy Spirit, our heavenly Father is at all times ready to bestow on all that ask it. Never disturb yourself with questions about election : ‘Seek, and you shall find.’ The very desire of the heart is from Him. He hath, blessed be His name ! given you that ; that is warrant sufficient for you. He hath not left you in carelessness ; He has stirred you up to inquire after salvation. O quench not His Spirit by doubting his willingness to save ! Your duty to your Redeemer is simply to believe in Him. When you are enabled to do this with the heart, you will find it will be unto righteousness. Faith is the parent, and not the offspring, of good works ; and faith is the gift of God.

“ It comes then, my dear friend, to this—that we must, by humble, patient, persevering prayer, beseech the Father for the alone sake of his dear Son Jesus Christ, to send His Spirit into our hearts to ‘convince us of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, and to enable us to believe on Him whom he hath sent. Then, my dear friend, ‘your wayward heart

will be regulated' by a new and holy principle of action,—love to God, when you behold Him in the face of Jesus Christ. Duties will then become pleasant, and religion's ways be ways of pleasantness, and her paths peace. Faith is the victory that overcometh all.

“ But before any thing effectual can be done, you must be decided. You must resolve to give up every idol, if you choose God and His service ;—a divided heart He will not have. I long tried to make reserves, —to avoid making a profession of religion,—to temporize. Nay, I long deceived myself with an idea that I was a Christian, because I had pretty clear and correct views of the great doctrines of the Bible, and did not rely upon any thing but Christ for justification ; but my heart was unchanged ; though I abstained from many worldly gratifications, and performed many right actions, yet it was from fear, not love. My heart still delighted not in God. Intellectual pleasure was one of my chief idols, and to it I sacrificed that time to which God alone had a right and a claim. But, of His mercies I am not consumed. He gave me to see my lost, deluded state. He showed me that I was losing both religion and the world, in my attempts to grasp both ; and, by giving me a view of their relative value, enabled me to lay hold on the one, and to let the other go. Though many have since been my backslidings, both of heart and life, and much my unfaithfulness, yet, through faith in the blood of Christ, for whose sake alone my sins were at first forgiven, and by whose death an all-sufficient atonement was made for ‘ the sins of the whole world,’ I am kept in peace, and am enabled to strive against the remaining corruption of my nature, and to desire to be delivered from it.

“ I send you herewith a little work of Baxter's,

which I beg you may read through more than once with prayer, Try to get over any dislike you may have to the style. The subject is one which warrants, nay, demands great plainness of speech. The everlasting salvation or damnation of souls is not to be hazarded for the sake of flowing periods, elegant language, and polite address. This, my dear friend, must be the apology for what may perhaps seem blunt in my letter. Be assured I shall be glad to hear from you early; and even if we should not always agree in opinion, yet I believe we love each other sufficiently to bear with each other."

Miss Gibson now found liberty to pray extempore in the presence of others; and, in writing to an intimate friend, rejoices to find that she also had begun this good practice.

"A NEAR view of eternity places the great and important things of this world in a new light, and divests them of all that attractive and dazzling splendour which deceives and ensnares the heart. I rejoice to learn that you have begun to pray extempore. O how it will invigorate your soul! Instead of applying to our fellow-mortals for words, let us go to the foot of the cross, and there say, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' I hope, my dear —, that we shall daily become more sensible of the value, the inestimable value, of the privilege of coming boldly to the throne of grace,—of pouring out our sorrows, our cares, our wishes, before the Lord, even the God who hath declared himself a hearer of prayer, and the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him. Never think of your sister,—think only of our Father who is in heaven; think of our blessed Lord, who will

sprinkle our petitions with His blood, and will present them acceptable unto God. Remember me, my dear —, in all your requests, and pray that I may be enabled ‘to hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope unto the end.’ O pray that I may daily increase in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ !”

Through an intimacy with Miss Stamp, a granddaughter of Mr. Smith, Miss Gibson had become acquainted with that venerable man, to whom, and to Mr. Wawn, she acknowledged her great spiritual obligations ; yet it does not appear that she ever entered a Methodist place of worship before the spring of 1819, when she attended the Anniversary of the Newcastle Methodist Missionary Society. Messrs. Watson and Bunting were the deputation from the parent Society, and Mr. Bunting preached on Sunday evening. She gives such an outline and character of the sermon, as evinces the love she now felt for the truth, and her joy that the Gospel was to be preached where Christ had not been named. She attended the public Meeting, and ably discriminated the various talents of the speakers. “ I considered it the most interesting I was ever at, except that at which Messrs. Hughes, Steinkopff, and Richmond were present.” Dining in company with Mr. Watson, she heard him relate an instructive anecdote concerning the late Rev. L. Richmond, which she thus prefaces and relates in a letter to a friend :—

“ I REJOICE to hear that you have established a little prayer-meeting. O may it be blessed to your souls ! I am a little, nay, much surprised, to hear that Mr. — refused to pray without a form. My

dear —, never you use a form again. I am not surprised to hear that you sometimes seem to want ideas more than words; but this, my dear friend, will cease to be the case the more you think of your wants in your moments of retirement. Mr. Watson related to us an anecdote of Mr. Richmond, on his commencing to pray extempore, which I think will not be totally irrelevant here. Can any thing relating to him ever be so?—

“ Mr. Richmond, about the time that the light was dawning upon him, and when he had begun to know a little of spiritual things, went to visit a poor sick man, whom Mr. Watson knew. He was a pious person, a Methodist; and Mr. R. went to see him on account of his piety, I believe. After conversing with him some time he rose to leave, upon which the old man desired he would pray with him. Mr. R. replied, he very gladly would, but he had not his book with him. ‘ O sir,’ said the old man, ‘ a book is not necessary for you to pray with me. I hear that you have been preaching a great deal better lately than you used to do; you do not need a book to pray. I will tell you how I do. I consider what I want, and then I kneel down and tell my heavenly Father. Now, sir, sit down awhile, and consider what you want yourself, and then you will know readily what I want, and ask for it. You do not need a book!’ Mr. R. took the old man’s advice, and prayed with him extempore, for the first time, I believe, in his life.”

This first acquaintance with Methodist ministers was auspicious, and prepared the way for her closer union with them. The impression was altogether favourable, and especially as she was yet enjoying the delights of her “ first love.”

"Bunyan truly says, "Christian is never long at ease." If there be no outward trials, there is still need of constant vigilance and care, to retain our blessings. Miss Gibson often painfully felt this necessity. To a friend she says, "Since I saw you, I have, I hope, made some progress in my journey Sion-ward, and have, blessed be God! enjoyed some sweet seasons of communion with him; but yesterday and this morning I have experienced a deadness in prayer which I have long been a stranger to. This I can distinctly trace to two causes. The first, having been too late in rising, which left me less time for devotion. The second, having given way to light and trifling conversation, which unfitted my mind for serious things, thereby grieving the Holy Spirit of God. Pray for me, that I may be enabled to exercise greater watchfulness. The language of my heart is,

'Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.'

I think I may with thankfulness add, that peace is again beginning to dawn upon my soul. O that I may never forget to watch and pray, lest I enter into temptation. The one succeeds immediately on the neglect of the other. Our blessed Saviour knew what was in man when he gave the exhortation."

TO MISS M. S.

"Newcastle, Sept. 29th, 1819.

"MY VERY DEAR M.,

YOUR welcome and long-expected letter was as a cordial to my mind, for it arrived just at a time when I was suffering from a variety of little trying circumstances, which, though apparently trivial, yet call for some degree of patience to support. That

patience, I thank God, I know where to seek ; and I believe my most prosperous seasons are those of outward discomfiture. It is then that I am favoured peculiarly with times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. It is then I feel the reality of that consolation, that very present help which, as Christian believers, it is our privilege to enjoy. Though I have anxiously expected your letter week after week, yet I never, even in thought, accused you of negligence, or want of affection. No, I knew your engagements, at all times numerous, were then particularly pressing. Though I never doubted your love, yet it was pleasant to me once more to hear the oft-repeated tale ; to find that you often thought of me, as I do of you, and supplicated the throne of grace in my behalf. We have, indeed, continual need of watchfulness and prayer.

“I find worldly, vain, unprofitable thoughts, my greatest exercise. O how they tend to draw away the heart and affections from God ! To regulate the outward conduct is a little thing compared with the keeping the heart right towards Him ; but faithful is He that hath called us, and He will do it. Only let us not slacken our endeavours in the pursuit of heavenly things. I find my disposition takes a great deal of humbling, and keeping humble ; and that a state of freedom from outward trials would not be at all profitable to me. My heavenly Father knoweth that I have need of these things ; therefore He sends me a small measure of them. The elasticity of my mind is such, that it is no sooner relieved from any pressure, which had bowed it down to its proper place, the dust, than it recovers its former state. O that I had an abiding remembrance, that I am but a stranger and a pilgrim here, in search of a heavenly

habitation whose builder and maker is God. Let us pray for one another, my dear M., that our faith may be increased, and that we may be strengthened with all might, so that we may overcome all our temptations, and having endured to the end we may be saved. Though we are weak, He is strong. O let us not faint, then, in the day of trouble, with Omnipotence pledged to support us ! The promises are all ours ; only let us believe, even in spite of unbelief.

“ I hope I have been profited as well as much gratified with H. More’s excellent ‘ Essay on the Character of St. Paul.’ She does indeed set forth his character in a luminous point of view, and in a practical one also. May we, through grace, follow him as he followed his Divine Master.”

In 1819, the Ladies’ Branch Bible Association was formed in Newcastle, and Miss Gibson was appointed Secretary. In the management of its affairs she took a prominent part, and generally drew up the Report. Her abilities and zeal rendered the infant Society essential service. She bore her part also in the drudgery of charity, and for many years collected for the Society in the districts of Ouseburn and Sandgate, the latter a district notorious for its wretchedness, moral and temporal. She continued these services until her marriage. In the School of Industry for the children of the poor in the neighbourhood of Sandgate, she took a warm interest, and was a member of the Committee for its management. She was also a collector for the Society for promoting the Conversion of the Jews, and afforded the same help to the Church Missionary Society. In addition to these more public engagements, she was an unwearied visiter of the sick and poor, administering medicine,

food, and clothing, advice, reproof, counsel, or spiritual instruction, as she judged every one had need. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this,—To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

In the month of May in this year, Miss Gibson was induced, by some considerations which she has not recorded, to keep an exact journal of the method in which she spent every quarter of an hour from the time she rose to the hour of retiring to rest. It served like the "petty cash account" of an economist, to show her how much time was lost in unprofitable, although not strictly forbidden, occupations; and how much greater benefit might be derived from its more exact economy and diligent improvement. The accounts are interspersed with humble confessions of "vain and wandering thoughts," "a lost hour," "a very barren day;" and many resolutions, and prayers for grace to dedicate all her time and powers to the glory of God.

Were we faithfully to record the employments and the triflings of a month with this exactness, who would not be shocked on the review of the lavish and careless expenditure of our only real wealth?—who would not be roused to seize with eagerness that present opportunity which is the only moment of which we are sure? "What are the breasts of most of us," says Leighton, "but so many nests of foolish hopes and fears intermixed, that entertain us day and night, and steal away our precious hours from us, that might be laid out so gainfully upon the wise and sweet thoughts of eternity, and upon the blessed and assured hope of the coming of the blessed Saviour?"

The following extracts from Miss Gibson's diary

will serve to exhibit her religious experience at this time, and to show the faithfulness with which she kept her record.

“Saturday, May 9th, 1819.—O Lord, I thank Thee that by an untoward circumstance, Thou hast mercifully brought back my wandering soul to Thee; yea, that Thou daily convincest me more and more that Thy rest is glorious, and that there is no peace out of Thee. O my blessed Saviour, turn not away from me, undeserving and ungrateful as I am; but rather humble, and improve, and sustain me by Thy grace, until every feeling and affection of my heart is fixed on Thee. O Lord, perfect me in love. Raise my desires, soften my heart, and prepare it for the reception of the good seed, even Thy word; and grant Thy blessing upon it, that it may bring forth abundantly the fruits of the Spirit! O my God fill me with Thyself! Let all my thoughts tend to Thee! Be Thou the source, the end, and aim of all my actions. Let me not return to lukewarmness; but do Thou, O my Saviour, daily and hourly enkindle within the holy flame of devotion, and feed it with the oil of Thy grace, that it may never become dim, neither languish; but grow brighter and brighter, until that happy day that it shall be lost in the effulgence of glory in Thy heavenly kingdom.

“May 15th.—After a morning of sad declension and backsliding in holiness, my soul has to acknowledge with deep humiliation and gratitude the goodness, longsuffering, and mercy of my God and Saviour, who, notwithstanding I have grieved and done despite unto the good Spirit of his grace, has yet deigned to enable me to repent and believe and turn unto him, even to my hope and my refuge. Ah! why did I turn away from following thee? Am I

not convinced that there is no happiness out of Thee ? Wherefore then didst thou leave Him, my wandering heart, who alone is capable of filling and delighting thee ?

“ O let me oft recur to this page of my diary, and in deep self-abasement mourn over my sins and defections, and laud and magnify thee, my God, who hast so often lifted me up ‘ out of the mire and clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.’ Teach me, O Lord, I humbly beseech Thee, to seek Thy counsel in all things, and to abide by the direction of Thy Holy Spirit. O teach me to trust in Thee with all my heart, and not to lean to mine own understanding. Humble me, O my God, and prove me ; and see if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Lord, subdue in me all earthly, sensual, and unholy affections, tempers, and desires ; and be Thou my joy, my hope, and my salvation.

“ Nov. 18th.—Let me thank Thee, O my God, for the blessed privilege I have enjoyed in hearing Mr. Scott expound the first chapter of the first Epistle of Peter. And O do thou graciously engraft thy word in my heart, and grant that it may prove incorruptible seed, and bring forth fruit unto everlasting life.

“ I have this day received another warning to take heed how and what I speak, that I offend not with my tongue. Lord, enable me to profit by it ! Keep Thou my heart, O Lord ! Watch over me, try me, and prove me ; and root out every way of wickedness, whether secret or open, and lead me in the way everlasting. O my God, preserve me from rash judging ; and give unto me abundantly of that excellent gift of charity. Lord, hear my prayers which I make unto Thee in the name of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

CHAPTER III.

Miss Gibson seeks another Ministry—Letter to C. N. Wawn, Esq.—Extracts from various Letters—Extracts from her Journal—Extracts from her Diary—Letter respecting her Doctrinal Views.

As Miss Gibson had now received a higher baptism than that of John, she strongly desired a ministry more instructive and spiritual. She felt that she had now entered upon a warfare which required all her skill and vigilance, all her courage and power; and she wished to be more fully instructed in the use of the Gospel-armour. For some time she had availed herself of private meetings where the Scriptures were read and expounded; but she also desired further help in the preaching of the word, in its fulness of privilege and promise and precept. She was yet comparatively ignorant of the devices of Satan, and she found it was not an easy thing to walk in wisdom toward those that were without, and to be in all things acceptable to God and approved of men.

The following letter refers to the great conflict of feeling, and the difficulty she had in deciding whether she ought to leave her accustomed place of worship in search of a ministry more suited to her spiritual attainments and necessities :—

TO C. N. WAWN, ESQ.

“MY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIEND,

“WHOSE kindness has been so uniform, and whose sympathy in all that concerns me is so strikingly manifested in your two last valued notes; to

whom can I so properly or hopefully turn for counsel or comfort in this warfare upon which I have entered as to you? or where find one so capable of entering into my feelings? This day has been one of sorrow. Having been with my Saviour on the mount, I find I must go with him into the garden. Yet He is with me; therefore I must not complain; and where His presence is 'there must be joy.' But it has been that joyfulness which I suppose the apostle had when he spoke of 'sorrowing, yet always rejoicing.' When I have asked to be made conformable to Him in all things, my beloved Lord might well have said to me, 'Ye know not what ye ask.' It never seemed to enter my mind, that the granting my petition would involve a necessity for me to drink His bitter cup, and prove a little of His sorrowful baptism. 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.' This always presented itself to me as a cordial in reserve for seasons of temporal affliction. I say, 'in reserve,' for it cannot be said that I have ever suffered. I find, however, the converse of this is also true, 'If ye reign with him, ye shall also suffer.'

"I think my gracious Master has to-day been showing me what (rather, that) I must suffer for his sake. He has been giving me a view of the narrowness and roughness of the way, which, however rough it may prove, admits no turning aside. I should have fainted at the sight, had he not said, 'I am with you always. I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee.' If all these apprehensions have been excited by the bare prospect of trials, how should I stand the real encounter? Bear with me, my dear Sir, in all my weakness, and in what may appear to you my folly; and cease not to pray for me.

"Your excellent directions as to stated seasons for private devotion, I feel greatly obliged to you for. Explicitness as to minor matters, (which, however, are often of major importance,) in religion, is far too rare. Most religious instructors too greatly presume upon much being already known, or think these things below notice. Happily for me, Law's 'Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life,' fell into my hands in an early period of my religious life. I immediately endeavoured to reduce his rules to practice. The hours of nine, twelve, three, and six have, since that period, scarcely ever passed over without either leading to devotion or exciting remorse. The directions there given as to special subjects of prayer for each season, I have often been very thankful for; particularly at times when the sacred duty was entered upon, rather to quiet conscience, than from any hearty desire after spiritual blessings. Thanks be to God, I had learned the way of salvation by faith alone, previous to my reading that book, or it might have made me a Pharisee.

"I shall at all times be glad to listen to your instructions, in the most apparently trifling points, knowing by sad experience that they who 'despise little things shall fall by little and little.'

"I would ask, if I durst, your opinion about my continuing under the same ministry I have been accustomed to. To this question I must come, though very unwillingly. I rely upon your considering it in all its bearings, taking in all my circumstances, and I trust you will be guided in your counsels by the Spirit of the Lord. If it be possible, advise me to stay where I am. But above all, pray for me, that the will of the Lord may be done in me and by me, and that I may see my way clearly. That the Lord

may abundantly recompense all your patience and forbearance, sincerely prays,

“Yours most truly,

“JANE GIBSON.”

The reply to this note was marked by the sound judgment of the person to whom it was addressed; and, whilst declining to give direct advice in so important a matter, (involving, as it certainly would, many difficulties that the public could not appreciate,) Mr. Wawn reminded her of such principles of religious obligation, in reference to the care of the soul, as furnished a directory to her conscience. Miss Gibson felt compelled, for her spiritual health and prosperity, but against her inclination, to leave her accustomed place of worship. This was in the spring of 1820; and the severity of this exercise is alluded to in the following letter to an intimate friend:—

“It has been to me a severe trial of faith and patience, and I have often been almost in despair to find, that, after all the goodness of my blessed Saviour to me, I am not more willing to suffer so light an affliction for His sake. Pray for me, my dear friend, that I may act consistently, and bring no disgrace upon my Christian profession. O for more faith, that I might be able to trust the Lord at all times! We are too apt to forget, that ‘in the world ye shall have tribulation,’ is one of our blessed Lord’s promises to his followers. O that He would cut short his work in my soul, and take me to Himself! But even in my desires to enter His heavenly kingdom, I fear there is a want of submission to His holy will.

‘When, my Saviour, shall I be
Perfectly resign’d to Thee?
Poor and vile in my own eyes,
Only in Thy wisdom wise!’

.....I return Mrs. H. More's Essays, with thanks. They are chiefly valuable as data in tracing the progress, the gentle and gradual progress of her mind in the knowledge of religion. Her works have from first to last been well calculated to win over the young of her own sex to a love of piety, and to prepare the way for deeper writers. She has been a blessing to the age.....I read Latrobe's 'Visit' some time ago with much interest and pleasure, and with thankfulness to Him who put it into the hearts of these simple, pious people, to go over and help their benighted brethren in Africa. May they go on and prosper. I have returned Dr. C.'s Sermons, from which I trust I have derived some benefit. They are truly excellent. Surely, my love, we are more highly favoured than any age or people."

The following miscellaneous extracts from Miss Gibson's correspondence will serve to exhibit her spirit as a Christian, and her faithful affection as a friend :—

TO MISS M. S.

" August 1st, 1820.

"How often does the Lord show us, as He did his servant of old, that He has many faithful followers, where we narrowly imagine all are worshippers of Baal! But, blessed be His name! He has in every place those who worship Him in spirit and in truth, whom we may discover to be children of the same Parent, by their bearing, in different degrees, His lovely image. May we all daily become more conformed to it! and especially in its leading features,—humility and love!

"I can, indeed, feelingly enter into your religious experience. I find a counterpart to it in my own :—

prone to take pleasure in earthly objects, when my whole delight should be in the Supreme Good ; often disposed to fall asleep, and remain in the pleasant places erected by our merciful and gracious King for the refreshment, but never intended for the abode, of travellers to the heavenly Jerusalem. What proof of a depraved nature, thus to pervert what was intended to be an excitement to gratitude, into an occasion of sin ! We may well pray, ‘ In the hour of prosperity, good Lord, deliver us ! ’ I seem at present in a state in which this prayer is peculiarly needful for me. Surrounded with every blessing which this world can afford,—health, and wealth, and friends,—I can hardly discover any marks of discipleship to Him who had not where to lay his head, who was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Pray for me, my dear M., that even in this day of sunshine I may not forget Him who died for me, and who requires of His followers an inward crucifixion, a death unto sin, and a mortification of spirit, until every thought is brought into subjection to Him. I trust I am not going back ; but yet I fear I am not pressing forward with that diligence which ought to characterize those who run for an everlasting crown. I often find myself contented with cold and languid devotion, without feeling the Spirit of Christ witnessing with my spirit that He heareth and answereth. Ah, my dear M. ! could true and ardent love be satisfied, if, at a specially appointed time and place of meeting, it found not its beloved there ? No : these things should not be. O, my soul, arise from the dust ! Shake off this spirit of slumber, and once more begin with diligence and energy to seek the powerful, cleansing, sanctifying influences of the blood of Christ applied to thee by the Holy Ghost. What comfort

is there in the assurance, 'Whosoever believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live!' O for more of this 'mighty faith, which cannot ask in vain!'

"There is a very common cause of spiritual dwarfishness, so to speak, which accounts for my having made so little progress in my growth,—the want of stability and constant diligence. There is a way of pressing onward for a time, and then slackening the pace, and then pressing onward again, and then sliding back, which prevents us ever making much approximation to that holiness which, nevertheless, we do not at any time altogether lose sight of. O let us no longer be of this number! Let us pray more earnestly, and watch more diligently. Let us, as the Apostle exhorts, 'be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' Let us never forget that the fault is all our own,—the glory his. 'Ye have not, because ye ask not.'

"I am glad to hear of the profitable companion you have found. May the Spirit of the Lord descend to bless you at your meetings! Christian communion is, indeed, a valuable and a sweet privilege. Leave all minor points on which you differ. Let your discoursing be of things that profit; of righteousness and faith, and your songs of the Lamb that was slain, and the glories of his coming kingdom; and you will never disagree.

"Will you present the little volume,* which accompanies this, to your dear sister, with my love? It is in humble garb; but, within, it is full of sweetness. I often have recourse to it for words to express my gratitude, or my self-abasement; to quicken my desires after holiness, or to quench my love of the world, and the things of the world. It contains a rich vein

* Wesley's Hymns.

of experimental religion. May we all grow to the measure of the scriptural standard it holds up !.....

“ I am glad to find you steadily resolving to serve the Lord, cost what it may. O never let the calculations of worldly-minded friends for a moment cause you to regret your decision to be his. They are mistaken in their principles of calculation. No, my dear M., if we stake Eternity against Time, we are sure to play a losing game. Let this be your motto, ‘ The Lord will provide.’ ”

“ MUCH as I rejoice to hear of your diligence in the pursuit of your studies, yet my joy is rather lowered by the fear, that, in your eagerness to attain proficiency in those undoubtedly needful things, you forget, or but occasionally remember, to study that most important of all sciences—religion. The Bible ought to form a part of every Christian’s daily reading ; and how much more carefully and prayerfully ought it to be studied by those who are to be the teachers of others ! No mathematical, critical, or merely human learning can atone for the want of piety and practical knowledge of that book in a Clergyman. Begin then, to-day, to read a portion of the Scriptures daily with earnest prayer for the light of the Holy Spirit ; and though you may not at first find it an engaging employment, you will, by a little perseverance and humble waiting upon God, find it not only easy but delightful. Continue diligent in business : it is a duty you owe to yourself and to your friends. But, my dear —, to your diligence in business, add fervency of spirit, which is as much more important, as our duty to our Creator is a more imperative obligation than any other.

“ As you have little time, I should recommend

your reading Mrs. More's *Christian Morals*, and her *Practical Piety*, in preference to her last work, as I think they will be more edifying to you."

Miss Gibson was early impressed with the importance of the views of the Gospel, usually termed orthodox; and was especially convinced of the danger of the Socinian hypothesis, and mode of investigating revealed truth. She early cautioned those she loved against the spirit of disputation evinced by some Socinians; "not because their tenets cannot be contradicted, but because the subtlety of their arguments might easily mislead a young mind, although they are not founded on truth." "Beware, again I say, beware of Socinianism in every shape: beware of it."

Alexander Knox, (*Remains*, vol. i. p. 248,) speaking of a blemish in the writings of Richard Baxter, owing to "his too-much indulged love of metaphysical subtlety; and, particularly, to an abstruse and indistinct notion of the Trinity," observes, "Few, I fear, are aware of the danger of speculating on this great point. For my part, I must say, that I have never known an instance, within my acquaintance or my reading, in which doubts or obscurities respecting the full and proper Godhead of the Redeemer, did not injure the real happiness of him who was possessed by them."

TO MISS F.

"Tynemouth, May 13th, 1820.

"MY DEAR MISS F.,

"I CAN assure you that nothing less than an incessant round of occupation since I received your letter should have prevented my sooner thanking you for it, as well as for the book which accompanied it;.

upon which, for the same reasons, I am unable to say any thing. The author has, I believe, rendered valuable service to the established Church, in defending her doctrines from the dangerous errors of those who represent her as holding the notion of baptismal regeneration, and is considered an orthodox minister. I once heard him preach a sermon from the text, 'God is love.' A more frigid, scholastic disquisition I never heard. There was, however, a most distinct view given in it of the Gospel plan of salvation; but it certainly was not exhibited in a way the most likely to draw sinners unto Christ. It was like a beautiful statue of the most correct proportions, but destitute of vitality. It was that, and no more, to those that understood it; but it would not even be that to a large number of a common congregation. A long metaphysical disquisition on the nature of love, and in what way it might be said to exist in the Deity, may be a very pleasant, and in some respects profitable, exercise to the understanding; but it never finds its way to the heart. I shall, nevertheless, read his work on the Holy Spirit, with interest and attention, and will tell you what I think of it.

"We must have very little of the spirit of our Divine Master—love, if any casual difference of opinion should in the least degree tend to lessen our regard for each other, or prevent our being desirous of helping each other forward in our journey to that land of light and wisdom, where we shall no longer see in part, or know in part, but where all who loved the Lord Jesus here, and trusted him, and followed Him, shall know even as they are known; where we shall no longer see different sides of the cone of truth, but, with enlarged powers of vision, shall be enabled to take in the whole. In the mean time, let us earnestly

pray for grace and strength, that we may be enabled to do the will of God, and we shall know of every doctrine essential to salvation, whether it be of God. Let us, as St. James exhorts, ask wisdom of God, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. Let us never rest satisfied with correct notions of faith; let us pray for, and seek till we obtain, that faith which works by love, which shall be a vital, energetic principle, continually operating within; purging us from dead works and sin; casting out fear; enabling us to serve the Lord acceptably in Christ Jesus.

“ I think, my dear friend, that a humble reliance upon the care of Divine Providence, and a desire to be guided by it in all our concerns, involves more than an acquiescence in the dispensations of our heavenly Father. It seems to me to imply an unreserved committal of all our ways and goings to Him; a putting, as it were, a blank into the hands of the Almighty, desiring him to fill it up according to his infinite wisdom. It is the offspring of faith, which is the parent of every good work; and it will always increase as we increase in faith and humility, and as we learn more of God and of ourselves; and it can never be complete until our will is put under the feet of Jesus, and made conformable to His will.

“ You seem, my dear friend, to have mistaken the nature of the assurance of faith. It cannot exist a moment longer than we continue relying upon Christ, and walking in His ways; and it involves a continual necessity of watchfulness and humility,—of taking heed lest we fall; and may at any period of life be lost, by our ceasing to continue in Christ. The Spirit will no longer bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, if we have departed from Him. Therefore, as we believe that all may forsake the Lord,

and make shipwreck of faith, past experience of his love and favour will not prevent our being 'cast away.* There is no period in this life in which a believer can rejoice but with trembling; nor in which he can say, 'My soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take now thine ease; thou art safe from want.' No; the moment he ceases to watch, to pray, to strive, he will recede; he will find himself shorn of his strength, and the Spirit of the Lord departed from him.

"For myself, I have to lament much coldness and deadness; much want of zeal, and gratitude to Him who hath done so much for me. The love of the world, and the things of the world, shows itself under so many different deceptive forms, that one is no sooner detected, than it assumes another; and pride and vanity, these hydra-headed monsters, no sooner lose one head, than seven seem to spring up in its place. Sometimes I am almost ready to despair; but when I remember that Omnipotence is pledged to fight for me, and that He can perfect strength out of weakness, I am enabled to go on, and to wait for His salvation.

"At such times, our Lord's promises to those that believe are very precious. Notwithstanding all my unfaithfulness, He is yet gracious. He still strives with me by His Spirit, and enables me to persevere, though faint. Pray for me, my dear friend, that my faith, and humility, and earnestness, may increase; and that I may give all diligence to make my calling and election sure.

"Your sincerely attached friend,

"JANE GIBSON."

TO MISS M. S.

"Newcastle, Oct. 26th, 1820.

"MY dear M.'s long, kind, Christian letter has often been in and on my mind; and I gladly seize an opportunity to reply to it. I quite agree with you in your views of the necessity of stated, regular, persevering prayer. O that I were more practically sensible of them! I was much enlightened and benefited in this matter, by Law's 'Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.' To those who already know that all that strict performance of outward duties is but a means of grace, I think that a most valuable book. I should rather fear putting it into the hands of persons who were not clear in their apprehensions of Christ as the only way to the Father; and of His death and merits as the only cause of our salvation, lest it should make of them, not humble disciples of Jesus, but Pharisees.

"Your friend's exhortation to watch over our waking thoughts, was salutary to me as well as to you. O how often do we need to be reminded of the things that we know and even approve! What a depth of depravity and ingratitude there must be in these hearts of ours, when, even after we are brought to know something of that love wherewith God hath loved us, we still need to be reminded to think of Him whom, one would imagine, we should never for a moment forget! I have lately been led to see more of my pride, and my need of a mortified spirit, in reading some of Baxter's works, particularly a selection from them published under the title of 'Baxteriana.' What deep views are there of the sinfulness of sin, and the need of crucifixion to the world! May the Lord lead me to experience more of it!

"Never heed what any one thinks of your serious

friend. She, it seems, is the messenger of God to your soul. He sendeth by whom He will send. Let us receive his messengers with love and thankfulness. And O let us pray for every high imagination, and every thought that exalteth itself, to be brought low ; that we may see a beauty and desirableness in every one that bears the image of Christ."

Miss Gibson's progress in spiritual knowledge and experience, and the conflicts she experienced with sin and temptation, will be best described in her own language ; and the following extracts from her journal, which contains a most simple and honest statement of the evils which she deplored as existing in her own heart, will furnish that history.

"June 5th, 1820.—A long suspension of my journal has occurred, occasioned in part by sloth, and in part by my not considering its continuance of any consequence. In reading lately the Lives of some of God's dear people, I have learned that they found it profitable to record the Lord's dealings with them, and to review each day at its close. As it is, through grace, my desire to embrace every means of searching my heart, and growing in grace, I now recommence this work, praying the Lord for his dear Son's sake to bless it to my spiritual improvement.

"Praised be His holy name, I believe I am growing, though slowly, in grace. I have lately been favoured with more opportunities of retirement and Christian communion by my visit at Tynemouth ; and I thank the Lord, they have not been wholly lost. Lord, help me to love Thee more and to serve Thee better, for these and all Thy mercies. O enable me to watch and guard against pride and vanity, (especially spiritual pride and vanity,) worldly thoughts and evil tem-

pers, in all which I have sinned against thee this day, O my God ! Lord, pardon me all my past sins ; and give me to see more of the unspeakable privilege of having ‘an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous.’ O enable me to come to Him continually, and to find grace to help me in every time of need ! Amen.

“ June 25th.—Must every page of my diary record my sinfulness and unfaithfulness, and Thy long suffering and goodness, O my God ? Even so. This has been, with shame I confess it, a week of declension in spiritual things. It was spent in visits at Tyne-mouth. I feel convinced that my going there was of my own ordering, and not in the order of Providence, and therefore it could not prosper. Lord, grant that the lesson I have learned on this occasion may never be forgotten by me ! Begun without the counsel and will of God, it could be productive of no good. My stay with —— was especially unprofitable, because I was ashamed of Christ ! did not acknowledge Him ! O Lord, preserve me in future from every degree of this sin ; and O, be not thou ashamed of me before Thy Father who is in heaven ! Through sloth, and indulgence, and the love of other things, my time with —— was not turned to good account. Worst of all, my visits to ——, which ought to have been highly beneficial, were marred by my vanity. This is my besetting sin. Lord, help me to fight against it. Lord, enable me to continue instant in prayer, until I am delivered from it. O have mercy upon me, for thy dear Son’s sake. Amen.

“ June 27th.—Help me, O my God, to watch against pride, and vanity, and impatience. Beware of religious sloth. A careless and negligent course will lay you open to the severest rebukes. ‘ You only

have I known,' says the Lord, 'of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.' Lord, engrave this on my memory, and cause it to produce in me a spirit of watchfulness and humility. Amen.

"Tuesday Morning, Aug. 1st.—During the last two days I have been declining, and am now in utter darkness. Lord have mercy upon me in Christ. He is worthy; but as for me, I am poor, and vile, and sinful, and helpless. I cannot pray. I never recollect, since knowing any thing of religion, being in such a state. O Lord, forsake me not utterly, but pardon me for Christ's sake. Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight. Sloth and self-indulgence have brought me into this misery. O Lord Jesus, draw me out of it, lest I sink deeper, and lose all sense of my situation. O Lord, help me! Strengthen me, and enable me to hang on Christ by faith, and again through him to enter into peace. Lord, hear my prayers, and enable me to prevail in the name of Jesus.

"Tuesday Evening.—O my God, when shall I be practically convinced that thou alone art the source and centre of all true happiness, and that in wandering from thee there is no real enjoyment? Let me sink into the dust, and be confounded, and never open my mouth any more before the Lord, now that he is, in his infinite mercy, reconciled to me again. O Lord, humble and strengthen me, and increase my faith, and enable me to look unto thee at all times; to deny myself, to take up my cross, and to follow thee wheresoever thou leadest or commandest. O let me never again forget thee, or prefer any thing to thee, my chief joy. Amen.

"Aug. 16th.—Received a heart-searching note

from my dear friend. ‘Why have I not entered into rest?’ This is a deep and important question. My carnal heart seemed to revolt at such close dealing; it wished to say, ‘Prophecy good concerning me; speak smooth things.’ But, O my God, let my better, my renewed part praise and bless thee for having given me a wise and faithful friend. O quicken thou me according to thy word. O help me, and enable me to struggle with my carnal nature, and to overcome.

“Thursday, Sept. 28th.—This week has been one of unsteadiness. O how continually I need to offer this prayer: ‘Stablish, strengthen, settle me.’ Self-indulgence in food, in sleep, and in vain and self-complacent thoughts, have prevented my enjoying that spirituality of mind which is my privilege. O Lord, enable me to watch and pray continually. O strengthen me, for I am weak. O wean me from earthly things, and enable me to set my affections entirely on heavenly things. O Lord Jesus, glory be to thy name; for in thee is my trust. Amen.

“Friday, Sept. 29th.—Prevented by sleepiness from making an entry of the state of my mind. Lost ground by indulging in slumbering in my chair, instead of performing my devotions and going to bed, through which I was unfitted for rising at my usual time this morning, Saturday. Never overtook the hour lost in the morning. A day of some small degree of self-denial. O Lord, help thou me to subdue that harshness of temper which I often feel; that impatience with others who do not see in my light; and O enable me to bear with the ignorance of others, as well as their evil tempers; and give me the spirit of love and meekness, of power, and of a sound mind.

Lord, pardon my sins, and grant that in all things I may show forth the spirit of a Christian.

“ Wednesday, October 4th.—Yesterday and to-day have been days of bustle and of mixing too much with the world, which have drawn my wavering heart from my God, and created a coldness and distance towards him which I ought to lament in deep humility and contrition. Lord Jesus, give thy Spirit. Self-indulgence and self-complacency, my worst and most powerful enemies, seem to have again got an ascendancy which I hoped they had lost for ever. O my Saviour, help me. O lead me into the narrow way again, and keep me there ! O cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. ‘ No Fiction ’ (an improper book for me) has tended to occupy my mind, and unfit me for devotion, besides wasting my time. Lord, teach me wisdom by my past sins, and follies, and rashness.

“ Wednesday, Nov. 8th.—In reading, yesterday, the Life of that man of God, John Fletcher, I found the following remark :—‘ An over eager attention to the doctrine of the Spirit has made me, in some degree, overlook the medium by which the Spirit works, —I mean the word of truth ; which is the wood by which the heavenly fire warms us. I rather expected lightning, than a steady fire by means of fuel.’ This has, through grace, led me to see an error of mine also ; and I resolve henceforward to be more diligent in studying the Scriptures. Lord, help Thy feeble child in this and every undertaking, for Thy dear Son’s sake. Amen.

“ Thursday, December 21st.—The Lord has this day been very gracious unto me ; He has visited and refreshed my soul, and given me, as it were, a glimpse of the land to be possessed. Truly his mercy

dureth for ever ! May the following passage from an excellent tract on Sanctification, by T. S. Pipe, be engrafted on my heart and memory !—

“ ‘Beware of backsliding, even in heart ; for such, if they are any way prepared for the Lord, are only prepared to have their backslidings healed ; and no one ought to think this the true conviction of the Spirit for inbred sin. The best way to be convinced of our want of greater conformity to our Lord’s image, is to follow increasing light as much as possible ; and such will soon discover the true state of their souls without backsliding.’

“ Again :—

“ ‘As a person about to build wisely removes the rubbish, and digs a proper foundation, so he that would be built up on his most holy faith in the fulness of Christian love, must take up his cross, deny himself of every sin, cast aside every weight, give up every idol, renounce every false maxim, forego trifling and lightness, check every foolish and hurtful desire ; in a word, be made willing to make a sacrifice to the Lord of every thing offensive in his sight, that it may be burned up.’

“ Thursday, Feb. 23rd, 1821.—Yesterday evening, visited my valued Christian friend and instructor —, and was much benefited and encouraged by his conversation on the doctrine of Christian perfection. I felt more than ever that it only needed BELIEVING for. It was, I saw and felt, purchased, and promised, and laid up for them that believed. I saw that I should never be more fit to receive it, as nothing, nothing I could do, could ever render me more worthy ; that it was by faith alone I must enter into that rest, that through faith the victory must be obtained ; and I knew that my condescending Saviour would cast out

none that came unto him. Thus encouraged, I believed against hope,—but yet I trust I have ‘believed myself to Him.’ I have no trust in myself; I believe solely in him who justifieth the ungodly, and of that number I am; but He is my righteousness. In him I have found plenteous redemption. As I write, my faith increases. I yet want the testimony of the Spirit; but for that I wait; and for that I also believe. O my Saviour, strengthen me; uphold me by thy free Spirit; for of myself I can do nothing. My soul only yet seems emptied of sin and self. O dare I say even this? But, Lord, I believe

‘That thou canst all things do.

Thou art almighty to create,—

Almighty to renew.’

O infuse into my soul all the graces of the Spirit! Cause me to bring forth fruit unto righteousness, and the end everlasting life; and to thee and to thy name be the praise and the glory, for ever and ever! Amen.

“Dec. 26th.—‘He that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure.’

“Through the goodness of God I feel once more stirred up to seek a deliverance from all sin through the blood of Jesus; and I find, even in the hope, a degree of grace and power communicated which, except when in pursuit or possession of this blessing, I never experience. Lord, let me not cease to seek it, until I, like David, find a place for Thee to dwell in; not a temple made with hands, but my own heart. O purify it, and fit it for thine own residence. Cast out every unholy guest, and take up all the place! Amen.

“Jan. 30th, 1822.—A day of many mercies, but not of much spirituality of mind; rather too much taken up with intellectual pleasures. I thank my God, I am however enabled to see the emptiness and infe-

riority of all things when compared with religion and its joys. Lord, give me with more diligence to pursue this my chief good, and by faith to apprehend all its blessings in Christ Jesus my Lord! Amen.

“In reading Dr. Cotton Mather’s ‘Essays to do Good,’ I have, through divine grace, found myself stirred up to a little more zeal. He recommends a list to be kept of the objects for which we desire to pray. The following will keep me in remembrance of many for whom I ought to lift up my feeble supplications. May I not, O my Saviour, do this in confidence when I approach the Majesty on High in thy name, seeing Thou hast ‘all power in heaven and on earth?’ Let, then, thy will be done. Make all men of one heart, and of one spirit in thee, and to thee shall be the praise and the glory. Amen and Amen.

“DAILY—OFTEN EACH DAY.—The dear members of my own family.

My beloved W——, in a peculiar manner, as set apart for the work of the ministry.

My dear friend, and ‘father in Christ,’ of whom I need no memento, for whom I can never cease to pray so long as spiritual life remains in me.

My dear M. and every branch of her family.

Our own servants.

Relations of my father’s side.

The families of my maternal uncles and aunts.

M. * * and M. L. Lord, I trust thou wilt give me their souls for my hire.

That branch of the family to which they belong.

My Christian friends in general. In particular

* * * *. [Here follow nine names, and the following remark.] Lord, revive thy work in

the latter especially! Show her the folly and sin of trifling, and of the love of dress.

The family of the ——— and * *, and * *, and * *.

May the Holy Spirit be poured out on all!

“SUNDAY.—Sunday-schools, and the Teachers in them, particularly the school of All Saints parish. The more serious children in that school.

“MONDAY.—The revival of pure and spiritual religion among the members of the Establishment.

The Clergy.

The Universities.

“TUESDAY.—The Bible Society.

All Missionary Institutions, and those engaged in them.

Every Institution which has for its end the evangelization of the world.

“WEDNESDAY.—The Methodist societies.

“THURSDAY.—The Curate of * * parish. Lord, carry on and perfect the work I trust thou hast begun in him!

“FRIDAY.—The Church universal.

“SATURDAY.—My Country.

The King, and all that are in authority.

The rich; the poor.”

Through the kindness of an early and highly esteemed friend of Miss Gibson, I am enabled to present a large extract from a correspondence, which serves greatly to illustrate the character of our departed friend, and will, I believe, enrich these pages.

The parties had for some time seen eye to eye on matters of personal religion; but as Miss Gibson began to read more extensively our best writers in theology, a dissimilarity of views on matters of a more speculative character grew up; and each became afraid lest that disparity of sentiment of which both were conscious, should mar their friendship. It could not be, that, with such unrestricted communications as that friendship demanded, their dissimilar views should never come into collision; and differing opinions on these subjects, they knew, had, to the disgrace of professed charity, long made the Christian church a field of polemical gladiatorship. Generally these topics were avoided; but at length free conversations ensued, and a candid statement of their views led to a correspondence which does equal honour to their heads and hearts. Miss Gibson, having, at the time she was struggling with convictions of sin, expressed herself on the side of Calvin, felt herself to be now particularly called upon to show how far and why she had changed her opinions; and then the subject dropped for ever. I have been favoured with a sight of the letters on both sides; and while they display great faithfulness and affection in reference to some points of personal conduct, and fully state the "agreement and distance" of the writers, a beautiful spirit is manifest throughout. There is no appearance of evil; no symptom of acerbity, or recrimination, or offence. Would that all religious controvertists were equally blameless!

I subjoin extracts which I am permitted to make from one of Miss Gibson's letters. Some of its allusions and references to other letters, it would be obviously improper to insert.

" Newcastle, April 14th, 1821.

" MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

" IF I could have commanded leisure, I would have sat down immediately when I received your long-expected and welcome letter, to thank you for it. I had indeed awaited its arrival with a little anxiety; and though, through grace, I am now in a good measure enabled to do what I think right, and then quietly wait the event, in the firm confidence that all will be well, yet your long silence after my letter made me fear a little having offended a friend whom I sincerely loved and valued. My mind, however, was quite relieved from all apprehension on that head by your letter.....

" Although a firm believer in general redemption, as most accordant with the whole tenor of Scripture, and as tending, according to my views of it, most to exalt the Lord our Saviour; yet if any one thinks the Calvinian scheme most promotive of His glory who is 'All in all' to me, as well as to them, I receive them as brethren and sisters in the Lord. I can enjoy sweet communion with them, (especially if they be, as you are, dear friends to me also,) and I would be silent upon those points wherein we differed; being well assured, both by experience and fatal examples, that the conversations spent in these 'doubtful disputations' seldom tend to the increase of love;—and though I firmly believe the truth of those sentiments I hold, yet I willingly acknowledge that enough may be said on both sides to keep both parties humble, and to destroy all bitterness between them.

" I would, however, my dear —, assure you, as I know your love leads you to be anxious about the soundness of my faith, that there is in my creed no idea of human merit, or of our being able in any way

to recommend ourselves to the favour of God, or of ourselves to turn to him. All power, all grace, all wisdom cometh from above ; is purchased by the precious blood of Jesus, and by Him freely bestowed in such proportions as his sovereign will directs, upon nations, churches, and individuals.

“ I believe that He displays his sovereign power in the bestowing various proportions of light and grace ; but I believe that he bestows upon all some, at least, one talent of his own free grace : that He has not left himself without a witness in every soul of man : that He enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world : that thus salvation is all of grace ; that damnation is all of free-will ; which will could never have had freedom, but by the grace of God purchased by the blood of Christ ; in our natural state as children of Adam, we having no power, no will, but to evil.

“ These views, my dear —, tend not to the exalting of the creature, but of the Creator. But though I have entered on this explanation, it is without any intention of entering into controversy on the subject. If any be otherwise minded, let them be fully persuaded in their own mind. If they love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, peace be on them, and on the Israel of God !

“ Thanks to my dear —, for her prayer that I may go on ‘ unto perfection ;’ and let her be assured for her comfort, that my notions of that blessed state perfectly accord with the Apostle’s in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians. The term, though a scriptural one, I would very sparingly use ; not because to me it is objectionable, but because it is a stumblingblock to many good people, who cannot separate from it some ideas which by no means belong to it. The substance of it was expressed

by the Apostle when he said, ‘The life that I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me;’ as well as when he affirmed, ‘I live not, (self is dead,) but Christ liveth in me, the hope of glory.’ Mr. W——’s experience is deep and scriptural; he abounds in humility, in faith, and in love to God, and to all mankind. Where these are, I cannot but adore the work of God; well knowing that none other than his Spirit can produce them in the soul of naturally corrupt man; and I see no danger in pressing forward after as much of them as is to be attained here. Call that state, in which ceasing from self, and looking every moment unto Jesus to keep us from sin, (and we doubt not this power,) call it, I say, what you will, this is the state in which a Christian will grow most in grace, and produce most abundantly of the fruits of holiness to the praise and glory of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

“My dear —, I believe we are both jealous for the honour of God; and I am sure we can cordially unite in saying, ‘Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the praise and the glory;’ and I trust we shall unite in ascribing it to Him to whom alone it is due, throughout all eternity. My heart warms while I write. O ‘when shall we come and appear before God;’ and all ignorance and misrepresentation be done away, and the church be one fold, under one Shepherd!

* * * * *

“Alas! we need never want subjects enough for lamentation, of a different kind, probably, but yet not less contrary to the spirit of Christ, and not less offensive to God,—among Dissenting as well as Established churches. Ignorance, and bigotry, and sin, attaches to them all.—‘I am weary of the

world,' said Mr. Whitefield, 'for it is a weary world; and I am weary of the church, for it is a spotted church.'—O let us be more earnest in prayer, for the outpouring of that Spirit which shall purify it as with pure water; that Spirit of burning which shall consume the dross and the tin, that it may be 'a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing,'—meet to be called 'the bride, the Lamb's wife.'

"In your letter next follows a remark, a warning, or a reproof for me; which of the three it is, I am not quite clear from the style of it;—but whichever it is, only let me know, and I will endeavour immediately to attend to it. Whose manner is it, my love, that you think I have adopted, or am likely to adopt? That my manner is in a degree changed, and I trust resulting from an inward change of heart, and temper, and disposition, I hope and believe. The things that once interested me, interest no more; and as it regards the things of the world, I find a degree of indifference which has considerably lessened my warmth of manner; and may it, indeed, all give place to that 'meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price!' Yet, my love, I am ready to listen to your admonition when you explain what and wherein I am wrong.

"April 18th.—I intended this to have gone by post; but it is extended beyond one sheet, therefore I must keep it until Friday. I felt, as you may imagine, much interested and obliged by the view you gave me of my progress in spiritual understanding. Yes, my love, I often look back upon the way by which the Lord has led me; and wonder at his goodness, his longsuffering, the abundance of his mercy and truth. And I feel very grateful to you, as

one of those whom He raised up to be a blessing to me; for by you He revived desires after himself which he graciously visited me with when a little, a very little child, but which I yet can trace, and in tracing which, I find abundant cause for gratitude and self-abasement. For some time before I knew you, I had, as far as his good Spirit would suffer me, left off to desire him, and sought my happiness in other things; but then He in his infinite mercy, rekindled the dead or dying sparks, and gradually,—though with many periods in which through my wilful sin, hardness of heart, and unbelief, they seemed nearly extinguished,—since has been fanning them by His Spirit into a flame of devotion.

‘O may it to his glory burn,
With inextinguishable blaze;
And trembling to its Source return,
In humble love and fervent praise.’

“Your remarks upon the state of my mind in the various periods to which you refer, are in general correct. I had during nearly all that time a fear of God; and he was enlightening my mind; for perhaps no one set out in religion with more complete ignorance of the scheme of the Gospel. I mean, even ignorant and unbiassed respecting opinions which may be acquired, right or wrong, without any work of grace on the heart. An attachment to certain forms and places I undoubtedly had; but they were unconnected with any sentiment whatever.

“You ask me where I learned my present sentiments? That question perhaps no Christian can more easily answer. My God, who has been peculiarly rich in mercy toward me,—O! that my life may evince my gratitude!—in bringing me to an acquaint-

ance with his professing people, provided me such friends as made my progress in the religion of the heart their entire aim in their intercourse with me. And I do not recollect any attempt made by any one of them, though they have been, and still are, attached members of distinct religious communities, to bias my mind in respect to their peculiar doctrines, of what kind soever. My reading was all of the same kind, it was not sectarian, it was not controversial; it was Christian: it related to faith in Jesus Christ, and holiness through the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. If I had a bias, it was toward Calvinism; but I had not embraced any system, because I knew little about any; and I desired to receive none as such, but to form my views by the Holy Scriptures, and the teaching of the Spirit of God. My inquiries in religion were, as an individual: 'How may I flee from the wrath to come?' I had no inclination to speculate. The summer of 1818 was, with me, a time of serious declension. Before the close of it, I fear all spirituality of desire was gone. Let me sink into the dust when I reflect on that period. A certain degree of the form of godliness was still with me; but even that was fading away. My sincerity of desire after spiritual things was gone. It was in the Lord's infinite goodness and abundant grace, that I was withheld from taking a step which would certainly either have marred all my happiness in this life, or have ruined my soul. My dear —, I must abridge, or I shall write a volume. My whole life is before me. The colouring of every scene, from infancy to the present time, is nearly as vivid as when actually before me. If you were here, how I could enter into it! But I must be brief, time will not permit me to enlarge. I see, I thankfully

see, the preventing, the assisting hand of the Lord in all. 'It is of His mercies that I am not consumed.' He created, He redeemed, He preserves me. I am his ! Blessed be his name ! Let the whole earth be filled with his glory ! Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, for ever and ever ! Amen.

"In the latter end of 1818, my dear Miss Milner died, and by her death the Lord in mercy awoke me from the slumber into which I had fallen. I then felt my miserable, lost, guilty, condemned state. I fell at the feet of my Saviour. I looked on Him whom I had pierced, and mourned. I was, notwithstanding the instruction I had received, still very ignorant concerning the way of salvation. What had been told me, I had not understood. The Spirit was not yet given to me. Of the witness of the Spirit, I had no conception ; of the knowledge of forgiveness of sins on earth, I had no expectation. This continued until Jan. 27th, 1819 ; when, on the evening of that day, as I was praying to the Lord that I might but continue mourning at the foot of the cross all the remainder of my days, a divine power overshadowed me ; all guilt and condemnation were taken away ; the whole tide of my affections, desires, and every feeling within me, was turned. The fear of God, that fear which hath torment, was taken away, and I knew that he loved me. Therefore I loved Him. I rejoiced with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. The Scriptures were opened to me. In short, I felt myself a new creature. This continued to me in all its force for a considerable period ; and the power then graciously vouchsafed to me over sin, has, with some exceptions, for which I ought to be deeply humbled, continued ever since. And though I have in these two years, often provoked the Lord, and caused him to hide his

face from me ; yet such has been his mercy that as soon as I have confessed my sin, and returned to him by the Way, even Christ Jesus, he has again forgiven the iniquity of my sin, and restored to me that blessed witness of his Spirit, and given me to walk in the conscious light of his countenance.

“ Now, my dear —, I can satisfactorily account for when and where I got my religious sentiments. They were taught me at that time by the Spirit of the Lord, without any human intervention. And from that time all that I have read of my Bible, and all that I have experienced, has confirmed me in them. Knowing as I did your sentiments, I never touched upon these points, because I believed they would be unprofitable ; and I now merely state mine, not intending to enter into any farther discussion concerning them ; because if either of us wish for that, we both know where there are books to be found in which much better arguments for both schemes are to be had, than any we can produce. Since you and I parted last, I have read a considerable part of Mr. Fletcher's Checks, and been much edified by them, and have experienced in the reading, I believe, an increase of love to all who love my Lord. There my views are ably defended, and I think scripturally, which is the only account on which I should value their defence. I feel thankful, however, that I had not read them before my present views were given to me, lest I might have been tempted to think I had called some man ‘master’ on earth.

“ Time does not serve me to say more. I thank my God that he has been with me in an especial manner lately ; that He has increased my love to himself, his word, his people, his Sabbaths ; and that though I feel in myself all weakness, helplessness,

and unworthiness, yet in my Saviour I find all that I need. In Him is my trust; and on him I humbly endeavour to cast myself every moment, knowing that those who trust in him shall not be disappointed. I see more of the simplicity of faith; and am enabled to act it more; to come as a little child to the feet of my Saviour; and to cast every imagination and reasoning at the foot of the cross, and to take Christ for all. O for more of the mind that was in Him! lowliness, meekness, patience, love.

“With a view to gaining every help in running the race set before me, I have joined the Methodist Society. I know not whether this will surprise you; it certainly does surprise myself, and is contrary to every intention of my own. This also I believe I have been directed in by the Lord. It is very lately that this path has been shown to me; but as soon as it was shown, I conferred not with flesh and blood, but simply followed what I believed to be the direction of my Lord and Master. In doing what I believe to be his will, I humbly wait to know of every doctrine whether it be of God; and I think, through the grace given to me, this is my single aim. In joining the Society, I have had no feeling of dissent from the Establishment; but simply a desire to increase my privileges, and to enjoy the benefit of church-fellowship in a degree in which they exist not in Newcastle, at least in the Establishment. Agreeing as I do in general sentiment with the Wesleyan Methodists, when they speak for themselves, I had no hesitation in choosing what body to join. Pray for me, my sister, that I may find among them all the spiritual improvement I need and desire. Your kind invitation I have no prospect of being able to comply with. My path, as you will readily imagine,

is narrowed ; but Jesus is with me, and all is well. Perhaps too, my love, the Lord is judicially visiting our non-improvement, nay, our abuse, of the time we had once given us to spend together for our mutual improvement. A time may come when we shall be able to meet with freedom : we know not what a day may bring forth. In heaven I trust we shall together praise our gracious God. Farewell.

“ Yours affectionately,
“ JANE GIBSON.”

It is almost needless to say that, after this interchange of sentiments, their friendship was without interruption, and only increased in affection, tenderness, and faithfulness. They thus added another to the many proofs already furnished, that, notwithstanding the alleged and general bitterness of zeal for orthodoxy, they who form their religious opinions for themselves, by careful, serious, independent examination, and earnest prayer, are far more charitable towards those who differ from them, than they are who imbibe their religious creed from association only, inherit the tradition of their fathers, or adhere to reputed orthodoxy, because it is the creed of the party to which other considerations have attached them.

CHAPTER IV.

Miss Gibson joins the Methodist Society, April, 1821—All that will live Godly must suffer Persecution—Her Christian Deportment in trying Circumstances—Her Affection for her Mother—Profit of her religious Discipline—Early Rising—Extracts from her Diary—Dr. Chalmers and Mr. Irving—Miss Gibson threatened with early Death—Visits Sheffield at the time of Conference, 1823—Letters after her Return—Mr Charles Wesley's Poetry—Prophecies—Poetry—Music.

THE sound judgment, the decision, and the Christian spirit displayed in the preceding chapter, will prepare us for another event of Miss Gibson's life, of greater importance in its results to the church as well as herself, than any which preceded it,—her connexion with the Wesleyan Methodist Society. She speaks of her having entered life with as little knowledge of speculative as of practical religion, and without having formed a creed. Her bias, when she first began to study religion, was towards Calvinism; but no influence was ever employed to lead her to embrace any doctrinal formulary, or any peculiar set of opinions; saving religion was alone the aim of herself and friends.

Her having occasionally attended the Methodist ministry, her desire of more adequate private help in the communion of saints, and, probably more than any thing, the agreement she found between her own views and those of the able defender and expositor of Mr. Wesley's doctrinal sentiments, together with her admiration of the spirit of Mr. Fletcher, led her to form an union with that section of the Christian church. The conscience and the prudence which she manifested in the former trials of her love to Christ, were

exhibited here. She was ready to avow her belief, to act upon her principles, and to hazard every thing upon them. I believe she was, however, left to debate and decide this matter within her own breast; for I can find no record of the particular circumstances by which she was induced to join the Methodist Society, farther than this,—that she believed she would there obtain the most effectual help in working out her own salvation, and that she had received such direction from the Lord, after patiently waiting for Him, as made it her duty to take up this cross also, and to suffer shame for his name.

It was in the beginning of April, 1821, that she first connected herself with this people, by entering Mr. Bargate's class. For a few weeks she wished to sit silent, to judge for herself by listening to others, and observing the mode in which such meetings for religious fellowship are conducted. Afterwards she was always free and open in communicating her religious experience; and very soon, according to custom in many of these smaller meetings, (in this case consisting entirely of females, with the exception of the Leader,) she joined in offering vocal prayer. "In this duty," Mr. B. observes, "she was very edifying, full of Scripture language, showing deep acquaintance with the things of God, and breathing sweet submission to His will."

She continued in this class until the end of the year 1823, when she and another were appointed joint Leaders of a small class of young females.

"Satan never sleeps. As long as any lives in this world, and wears flesh, he finds war." Miss Gibson had now entered fully upon this warfare, and she soon had painful experience of the severest conflicts. She had, however, counted the cost; for all her actions

from early life were regulated by reason, if not by grace; and in a matter of so great importance as she felt the salvation of her soul to be, the whole question in its results and consequences was deliberately weighed by her. Increasing light brought increasing exercises of the grace vouchsafed. Her Christian course was eminently distinguished by decision, and her character owed much to the training she received during the first seven years of her religious inquiry and enjoyment.

She felt obliged on several occasions to take steps which were not approved by some of her friends; and sometimes her motives were not appreciated. Those of her friends who were not fully enlightened on the great subject of personal and vital religion, naturally raised many objections and some opposition. But though the sacrifices for conscience' sake, to one so newly awakened, and standing then alone in the family, were beyond expression painful to one who so dearly loved her friends, yet she was found faithful in the day of trial.

Offences on the score of religion will not only separate chief friends, but a "man's foes shall be they of his own household." This must ever be the result of confessing Christ before men, "not peace, but a sword." "For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother." "But he that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." No part of Miss Gibson's life exhibited more of the power of religion in sustaining her own mind; nor more of its genial influence, in her temper and conduct towards others. Hers was one of those cases of not unfrequent occurrence, where some of the junior branches of the family are brought to the knowledge of the truth as it

is in Jesus, while the parents are probably resting satisfied with that course of morality, and that regard to the externals of religion, which meets all the demands of the general opinion of the world, and that spirit of Pharisaism which they inherit from an orthodox ancestry. Such new converts have heavy crosses to bear; and their course is truly up "the hill Difficulty." They are perhaps young; and why should they presume to set up for judges in religious doctrine at all? but especially in opposition to those, who, because they are their seniors, it may be presumed are better qualified to judge! They are perhaps fervent; and the ardour which was commended as a noble enthusiasm, so long as it was confined to the pursuit of earthly good, or ambitious projects, is now denounced as fanaticism, because engrossed with subjects on which "'t were impious to be calm;" and is truly offensive to all who confine religion to frigid sentiments and formal prayers. They are conscientious; and because they have renounced trifling and mirth, because wisdom is better than folly, and they now prefer the Scriptures to a novel, and religious ordinances to balls and concerts, and even the distribution of tracts or visiting the sick to "a friendly game at cards," they are charged with affected singularity, or direct disobedience. It is not improbable that some young persons may peruse these pages, who are called to sacrifices and sufferings in this way to a degree far beyond what Miss Gibson was ever called to endure. But we would earnestly advise them to pursue the same course of decision and prudence which she adopted; observing the most entire deference to every expressed or implied wish of their friends, where it is possible without infraction of the law of God, or injury to their own peace and soul-prosperity; and taking care,

by firmness of principle and kindness of manner, to maintain and illustrate the strict holiness, the passive courage, and the mild benevolence of the Gospel.

Nothing could exceed the filial affection and reverence with which Miss Gibson contemplated the character of her mother; and, except on the score of personal religion, she was ready to offer the most unhesitating obedience. She seemed to think it impossible that her mother should be mistaken, until she became herself better instructed in reference to religion. Speaking of her to a friend, when about fourteen or fifteen years of age, she says, "I have often lately been led into the melancholy thought of a separation from my dear mother. I do not know what brings it on; but, O! my dear girl, the thought is distressing; to part with that being, whom, of all others on earth, I love most! In thinking of parting with her, my soul shrinks back upon itself. With her I would prefer the sordid hut of cheerless poverty, to all the gay glitter of a palace without her. Often, my dear friend, is my pillow wet with my tears when thinking of this distressful subject." A few years afterwards, when suffering under the disappointment of not being permitted to visit her friend at a watering place, a few miles distant, she says, "Surely all our schemes of happiness are only made to be frustrated. But when I consider, my dear friend, that all the disappointments of my life have only been from these and similar causes, I dare not murmur at the decrees of that kind being, (for I must call her kind,) whose removal from me would be the greatest of misfortunes."

Nothing but the strong principle of duty could lead such a daughter, entertaining these feelings towards such a mother, to oppose her wishes. Mrs. Gibson

plainly saw that, in her daughter's case, practical dissent would finish what a departure from the parish church had begun. It was not without jealousy that she saw in her a growing attachment to Christian friends out of the Established Church; and this it was which really alarmed her fears. The choice between the Baptists and the Methodists, was but the difference between Scylla and Charybdis; they were alike fatal to her peace, and were the wreck of her fondest hopes. On Jane she doated, and no doubt expected her to rise to eminence; but this decision she considered to be an insuperable bar. However, the die was cast; and Miss Gibson had no desire to recall her decision. Having counted the cost, she was able to finish. None but God knows what was the cost; but she refused the pleasures of sin, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, esteeming the reproach of Christ, for she had respect to the recompense of reward. As Howe says, "Though it is not the lot of every Christian to be an actual martyr, yet every true Christian is an habitual one." Miss Gibson was deeply imbued with the spirit of the moral martyr. Every step she advanced in her religious course gave fresh and increased offence to some or other of her friends. But she held on her way, and, having clean hands, waxed stronger and stronger.

During the whole of these exercises, and they were long-continued, she manifested the most perfect patience, the greatest tenderness towards others, the most unwavering principle, and a spirit of willing sacrifice. She was careful not to cause unnecessary offence; and was rigid only in matters pertaining to conscience, whilst she freely and cheerfully gave up her own will in matters indifferent. In securing-time

for private retirement, and the means of her own soul's well-being, she was exemplary ; especially as she took care not to neglect any of those duties which she owed to her parents, and the other members of her family. In maintaining family-worship, she conducted herself with such consistency as to command respect ; and performed the service so regularly, that she was not known ever to omit it.

The buoyancy of Miss Gibson's natural spirits, and the strong tincture of a sound philosophy which pervaded her mind from infancy, together with her religious consolations, frequently enabled her to rise above the natural tendency of many circumstances to depress her mind. With the bulk of mankind—for the remark cannot be confined to her own sex—their religious principle would have given way under the pressure of these difficulties ; but she lived by faith. Yet there can be no doubt that the delicacy of her general health is chiefly to be referred to the exercises of this period. The spirit of sacrifice in which she lived was not to be maintained without frequent agonizing. But in the seasons of her severest trials, her appearance never indicated dejection or dissatisfaction. On the contrary, she cultivated a cheerful and peaceable disposition, endeavoured to render religion amiable, sought the salvation of her friends by introducing books, and occasionally a friend, and especially earnestly remembered them in intercessory prayer. Often has she said, with the feelings of the apostle, " I could wish myself accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

This was the seed-time of her religious life ; and rich was the harvest. Her character under these dispensations was softened ; and her graces were matured. And here she learned " how to speak a word

in season to him that is weary." Some of her best lessons were thus set home upon her heart, so that she never forgot them ; and she was thereby admirably qualified to give the counsel of bitter experience to others. Some years afterwards she thus refers to the lessons learned in that painful school :—

"I always feel it necessary to guard against satan when he transforms himself into an angel of light ; and says, 'True thy duty seems to be here, (perhaps it is a very plain case,) but thou mayest get thy soul refreshed by going yonder.' My circumstances, when I first set out in the way, were, in reference to such matters, often very difficult, and led me to so much salutary self-denial, bringing with it so gracious an experience of the goodness of God in overruling that self-denial for my profit, (I should rather say, often not leaving to me the hard task of denying ; so that I should not call it self-denial, but rather to seek and cultivate submission to the will of others, under the view of resignation and submission to God in them,) that I am now, I think, generally enabled to inquire sincerely in such cases, what is my duty, rather than what I should like ; and, best of all, to like my duty. I say this, solely to the praise of the grace of God. I learned it slowly ; but the Lord gave me line upon line, yea, and stroke upon stroke, till I did learn it. He did not make this one of your first lessons. Your circumstances were different ; but I have observed within the last two or three years, that you also have been called to learn it.

"When you are grieved by the defective preaching of the word in the Church, be sure to be more earnest in prayer for those Ministers, that their eyes may be opened, or more efficient persons appointed as shepherds of the flock. This will increase our love to

them ; and love is a debt we owe to all. It seems to me that we are bound to assemble for the public worship of God in whatever place we are, with those who profess to worship Him ; always endeavouring to go, when there is a choice, where we believe we shall be most likely to obtain a blessing : but if there be no choice, to go where the Lord's name is recorded, that we may there wait for Him, and claim His promise ; and if we look to Him we shall not go empty away. I know some excellent persons who, in such circumstances, often spend the time of sermon very profitably in abstracted prayer.

“ You and I, my dear —, can never be too frequent in reviewing our own privileges, and means of obtaining the knowledge and grace we possess. Many who in name and office are ‘masters in Israel,’ never heard the things we have heard, and never saw the things that we have seen. If they had, we know not how much more they might have profited. We have been favoured with these blessed calls, too, in early life ; a season when the mind is more susceptible even of divine impressions, and when it costs much less to give up many things which, if they had time to grow and strengthen into habits, (outward as well as inward,) would have been much more painful to eradicate. I often am benefited, and I think my charity is increased, by meditating on the long-suffering of God ; especially when my patience toward those who ‘deal in the false commerce of unfelt truths’ is nearly exhausted, by the recollection that God bears with them, though He has all power. But He has all wisdom also, and He knows to over-rule for good, and for His own ultimate glory, all these things. Let us then show forth His praises by reflecting, in our degree, His image, that He may be seen and loved in us.”

Her sense of the value of time, and of the importance of early rising, as the greatest economy of time, is expressed in the following passages from different letters, written at this period.

To a friend studying at one of our Universities, she observes :—

“ON those mornings that you have to attend public prayers, you ought to prepare yourself for early rising by early going to bed the Light before. Indeed, you would greatly lessen the difficulty which I am sure you will find in being up in time, by pursuing a regular course of early retirement and early rising ; for they must go together. If you could but prevail upon yourself to use this little self-denial at first, you would soon find an hour in the morning worth two at night. What may perhaps recommend the practice to you, I believe it has been the general custom of the most learned and excellent men of all ages. You may suppose, perhaps, as I did once, that you cannot sleep at an early hour if you did go to bed ; but if you rise in time, nature will soon provide a remedy for that complaint. Another serious evil arising out of these late vigils is, that when you thus employ your mind in study to the latest moment that your bodily powers will allow, there is absolutely no ability to engage in devotion, and the day is closed without either acknowledgment of mercies, or supplication for protection ; and the next is probably begun in the same way, because you are unable to rise before the temporal duties of the day prevent these imperative calls.”

To another friend she observes :—

“THE subject of your letter next in interest and gratification to me, was your rising an hour earlier.

And this on two accounts, both as a victory and a prey. This is dividing the prey with the mighty : The enemy overcome, and time gained. This is being more than conqueror, and it is through Him who hath loved us. You can scarcely imagine what pleasure I feel in the thought that you are up at seven ; and of course will thereby be enabled to be punctual in a much higher degree by gaining this morning hour, which is worth two at any after-period of the day."

And again :—

"EARLY rising I find almost essential to my religious life ; and this involves of necessity, early rest, which cuts off many hours which I used to devote to writing and general reading, as I almost uniformly devote the whole of the time gained in the morning to prayer and reading the Scriptures. This I find a blessed habit. This is the 'girding up the loins of the mind, the putting on the armour of righteousness.' Nothing, I find, is to be gained or retained in our spiritual warfare, without prayer and watchfulness. But, as the Missionary Eliot observes, 'prayer and pains, through faith in Christ can do any thing !' Blessed be God, I find they can do much, I have lately waited upon the Lord with more diligence, more earnestness, more expectation ; and He has not been unfaithful to His promises ; and I call upon you, my dear M., to join me in praising Him for all His benefits, and in imploring for me a spirit of increased watchfulness, zeal, and love. Love ! In this blessed word is all we want. Love to God,—love to man, as the consequence ! I thank the Lord for a degree of this I never felt before. May the flame,

kindled by the Holy Spirit on the mean altar of my heart,

‘For ever to his glory burn,
With inextinguishable blaze ;
And trembling to its Source return
In humble prayer, and fervent praise.’ ”

About this time, April, 1822, Miss Gibson was called to very severe exercises of faith and submission. The particular circumstances of those trials are not of a nature to profit the reader ; but the triumph of grace is one which we should all do well to strive to share. She committed her ways unto the Lord, and found he made “a plain path” for her. The way in which she was called to walk, was the way of sacrifice ; and her burden was a heavy cross ; yet God gave her strength and grace even to rejoice in carrying it ; and she only wished to approve herself “a follower of Jesus, who did not his own will, but the will of Him that sent Him.”

This was another instance of that spiritual discipline with which her Heavenly Father proved her, to see what was in her heart, whether she would keep His commandments or not. And the profit of it was great in the subsequent periods of life. It was one of those events, the moral of which she could no more forget, than the circumstances. That it might the more impress her, that “them that honour Him He will honour,” and that nothing was done or renounced for His glory without His most gracious regard, Miss Gibson had soon to put on record the great things the Lord had done for her. “When Thou didst terrible things which we looked not for, Thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at Thy presence. For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither

hath eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember Thee in Thy ways."

"Sunday, April 28th.—O my God, I know not where to begin the wondrous tale of Thy goodness to me. This day has been one of refreshing from Thy presence. Thou hast cheered me with news from 'a better country.' Thou hast blessed me, unworthy as I am, with some fruit of my labours. Thou hast opened to me new doors of usefulness, and hast graciously stirred me up to a greater degree of diligence in doing good, especially in seeking the welfare of souls. O keep me watchful, humble, faithful. Guide and direct me. Suffer me never more to sink into lukewarmness; but O enable me to redeem the time, and to employ it all for Thee !

"May 21st.—Yesterday was a day of much painful feeling. My faith was not in lively exercise, and I fear I indulged in sinful regrets. Pardon me, O Lord, in this thing, for the sake of my infinitely meritorious Friend and Advocate, Jesus Christ. O the comfort of remembering that He is the 'Friend of sinners'—sinners, of whom I am chief. I would not, Lord, if I might, take my affairs out of Thy wise direction. If I suffer, let it be according to Thy will. That will make even suffering sweet. 'The Christian,' says Chrysostom, 'has his sorrows as well as his joys; but his sorrows are often sweeter than his joys.'

"I this morning opened the Life of Henry Martyn. The passage which first presented itself to my eye was the following, which has been much blessed to me :—

“‘I believe that those connexions, and comforts, and friendships, I have heretofore so much desired, though they are the sweetest earthly blessings, are earthly still.’

“Lord, endue me with more of the spirit of this holy, devoted servant of Thine !

“August 20th.—The interval which has passed since the last date, has involved great variety of circumstances and Christian experience. Often have I been prevented writing by the great uncertainty in which I stood, as it regarded my real state. Often have I been ready to say, ‘All thy waves and billows have gone over me.’ I have been ‘perplexed, yet not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ;’ and though I have suffered much from fightings without, and fears within, I have been preserved and delivered, and am enabled this night to bless my covenant-God. Though I have been unfaithful, He has been faithful. Lord, continue to guide and strengthen me, and keep me from all evil, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.”

In October, 1822, Miss Gibson had the happiness of meeting Dr. Chalmers at an evening party as he passed through Newcastle. She was delighted with his demeanour, and with the simplicity and fervency of his prayers ; and has preserved a notice of the topics of his exposition of 2 Thess. i. and chiefly verse 8. “His observations went to prove the sinfulness of unbelief, and ignorance of God ; and to show the fallacy of those arguments by which men would contend, that as the Spirit of God, by whom alone saving knowledge is given, is not in their own power, condemnation is unjust. ‘Now,’ said he, ‘though I grant that belief is, in a certain sense, proportioned to the quantity of evidence, yet it is in the way of

obedience that the evidence is to be sought. All may come under the promise of the gift of the Spirit by asking for it. Now the Bible,' he added, 'is the place of meeting appointed by God for Himself and His people. To reveal, unseal, and apply, not any new truths, but those written therein, the Spirit is given; and, in reading it with prayer, divine light may be confidently expected. This is the way of obedience. Had the apostles, when commanded to go to Jerusalem, and wait for this crowning gift, chosen to go elsewhere, or not chosen to assemble any where, to wait for it, we have no reason to believe it would have been given to them.' This is the substance of what he said. He prayed very simply and fervently, and thus concluded.

"What a noise Mr. Irving, Dr. Chalmers's late assistant, is making in London! I should fear, to little purpose. The title of his book gave me a poor opinion of him. 'Orations' and 'Arguments' are too philosophical and conceited for the simplicity of the Gospel. The religion of our lowly Lord and Master has had but a very limited operation where it has not greatly simplified a character. Since I have seen something of the book, my opinion is not altered. There is much rant and declamation; a copy of Dr. C.'s faults, which are indeed often caricatured; much talk about patriotism, and very little about Jesus Christ. Would that all Ministers had resolved with St. Paul to know nothing among their people but Christ and Him crucified; to glory in nothing but the cross! They would carry more trophies of victory with them from the field of battle. The foolishness of God is wiser than men."

We have before had occasion to notice the delicacy of Miss Gibson's general health; but in the spring of

1823, it became so much worse that she apprehended that that fell disease, consumption, lurked in her constitution. From several symptoms, not only she but her friends were apprehensive of some occult mischief. It pleased God, in the course of that summer, graciously to remove those painful symptoms; but by an extract from her diary, that faithful transcript of her heart, we shall be enabled to judge of the vigour and humility of that faith which sustained her in what appeared to be the approach of death, as clearly as we have seen how zealously the same principle enabled her to labour for God.

Under date, May 14th, after stating among other reasons for not having for four months recorded the state of her mind, that she had often, she feared, been hindered by sloth, she observes:—

“I have in that period seen and felt much of His power and goodness; and though I have often provoked Him by my transgressions, yet He graciously forgives and freely loves me for the sake of His dear Son. This He testifies to me by His Holy Spirit.

“I have been most of this time in what I consider rather a declining state of health; and to-day especially, I have felt as though I had received a message to set my house in order. My mind has been much upon eternity. Thank God, there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. I lament my unworthiness—utter unworthiness. In me dwelleth no good thing; but in my Saviour an infinite fullness.

‘Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress :
’Mid flaming worlds, in these array’d,
I shall with joy lift up my head.’

“I think I have no wish to live, but to show forth

the praises of Him who hath called one out of darkness into His marvellous light. I lament that I have hitherto so little honoured Him ; and I pray that I may henceforth walk unblamably in holiness through faith in Christ Jesus. Through faith : all I do must be through faith. Mysterious way of salvation. The wisdom of God ! O the depth !!!

“ Lord, I thank Thee for what Thou hast done for my dear ——. Finish Thy gracious work in righteousness. Save my dear parents. Bless my dear Christian friends. Lord, I thank Thee for them. Bless Thy church universal. Let the people praise Thee, O God ; yea, let all the people praise Thee ! Amen and amen.

“ Saturday, May 17th.—‘ Truly God is good to Israel.’ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. To record them all would be impossible. Eternity itself will prove too short to utter all His praise. Though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me. All mine iniquities are forgiven ; my sins are covered. Surely I am blessed ! My Beloved is mine, and I am His ! In Him I possess all things, whether life or death, this world or the next, all are mine whilst I am Christ’s. What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits ? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee, and desire to glorify Thee. O increase my love ; enlarge my heart, and fill, for ever fill it with Thine infinite fulness ! Every moment let me wash in the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness. Every moment let me live by faith in the Son of God, who hath given Himself for me ! ”

Miss Gibson then alludes to certain symptoms

which she thought indicated incipient disease, and, glancing at the probable issue, adds:—

“EVEN so, Lord ; not as I will, but as Thou wilt. I never felt so desirous to live as I do now, that I may glorify Thee ; but if Thou seest fit to remove me, I shall rejoice. Let me have no will but Thine ! Prepare me, O my God, by purity of heart, to see Thy face. Fulfil in me all the pleasure of Thy goodness, and the work of faith with power, and then receive me to glory !

“In looking back this day upon all the way that Thou hast led me, I see at every step cause for gratitude and self-abasement. How often have I turned aside ! How long did I withstand Thee ! How mercifully didst Thou seek Thy lost sheep ! How patiently hast Thou borne with me ! Bless the Lord, O my soul !

“I thank Thee for those views of Christian doctrine which, I trust, Thou hast given me. Wherein I err or am ignorant, teach Thou me. Thou hast made me willing to hear what Thou wilt say. This is of Thine infinite mercy !

“In reviewing my sentiments, I find none which I wish to alter in the prospect of death. They are in exact unison with those of the established Church of England, as set forth in her liturgy, and as held by one of her holiest ministers, the Rev. John W. Fletcher. They were taught me, I trust and believe, by the Spirit of God ; and I thank Him, that from my first acquaintance with the justifying faith of the Gospel, I have not been tossed about with various opinions ; but have had a firm and enlarging belief of the truth as I first received it. It was graciously at first bestowed upon me—I mean the clear sense of

justification, without human agency. From Mr. Fletcher's writings I have since, under the Divine blessing, derived much benefit. An unction has ever attended the perusal of them, which I have rarely experienced, except in reading the Scriptures.

"I thank God for my having been led to join the Methodist society. Their means of grace have been very profitable to me. There is much of true simple piety among them; much of the life of God in them. The Lord bless them, and make them a thousand times so many more than they are, and put His Spirit in them, and guide them continually.

"And, O Lord, do Thou revive pure and undefiled religion in the venerable Establishment of this country. Raise up faithful ministers in it, that those who love it may not have to seek elsewhere the communion of saints. Let it not have to be said, 'Take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's.' Blessed be Thy name, Thou hast heard prayer in her behalf!

"Remember Newcastle, O Lord, and send the word of Thy truth with power and with the Holy Ghost unto all the churches.

"* * * Lord, grant that he may turn many to righteousness, and shine as the stars for ever and ever!"

In the beginning of 1822, Miss Gibson's acquaintance with respectable Methodist families became enlarged; and in the summer of the following year, she had the opportunity of visiting Sheffield at the time when the Conference held its annual session. Here she had such advantages in studying the economy and working of Methodism, as she could not have at home. She had full opportunity of scrutinizing the character

and spirit of their ministers ; and abundant means of judging of their talents by attending the numerous public religious services. She was fully capable of appreciating their ministry ; and she embraced every opportunity of forming a correct estimate of Methodism in all its plans, means, and operations. The views she there formed, she entertained through life : —“ That there did not exist another system, or body of Ministers, equally efficient to accomplish the great purposes of the Redeemer in saving souls and evangelizing the world.”

Some may be ready to suppose that her views were biassed ; others that she was not competent to pronounce such a judgment ; that her acquaintance with Methodism was too short and scanty ; and that, at least, such expressions were too laudatory, and almost extravagant. But it ought to be remembered, that these views were extremely diverse from the prejudices of her education. Nor can it be supposed, that so sober and judicious a person, so far removed from fanaticism and enthusiasm, so determined to weigh before she judged, and, having judged, to act upon her individual responsibility, should not form an opinion on such a subject, at least deliberate, honest, and conscientious. Whether the views entertained of a religious system after we have espoused it, and of the superiority of a Christian church after we are united to it, are as sober, and candid, and unprejudiced as before, is perhaps a questionable point. We may appeal to any individual, whether he supposes that he is equally fitted to discriminate the character of his own family, and to see their defects and failings as readily as those of other families ? whether, — notwithstanding that fuller discovery of each other's more private errors and failings, the dwelling under one roof affords, —

the benign influence of that brotherly love which is the bond of perfectness, does not cover a multitude of sins, and make us innocently blind to such infirmities in our brethren as appear to be serious blemishes in the character of those who are "not of us?" Miss Gibson, while deliberating, took as full a view as might be of the defects and infirmities of that body of Christians;—for what earthly church is without them? But, having decided, her constant desire was to cast the mantle of love over them, and to endeavour and pray for their removal. But there was nothing bigoted in her spirit, or illiberal in her commendations. She was rigid in her creed, but catholic in her affections. She preferred to dwell among her own people; but she did not forget the debt of universal charity. Abundant evidence, I think, is furnished that she did not consider Methodism as existing for narrow, bigoted, sectarian purposes; and she made the motto of that people her motto:—"We are the friends of all, the enemies of none." "What a mercy I count it," said she, "that I have been enabled so to see the importance of vital piety above every form, however excellent, as to unite myself to a people bringing forth the fruits of righteousness. To share in the prayers of a true church is an unspeakable, incalculable blessing. It is in this way that a church, founded upon the rock, even Christ, possesses the keys of heaven and of hell,—opens and shuts. May we ever be living members of the mystical body, growing up into Christ, our Living Head, in all things."

After Miss Gibson's return home, there was a marked improvement in her spiritual character; and her increased knowledge of divine things led her only to desire that she might be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual under-

standing, that she might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work."

The following is an extract of a letter which breathes a fervent piety, and the most grateful affection to her friends.

TO MRS. T. W.

"Newcastle, August 29th, 1823.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"You must indulge me with a letter a little oftener, at least until I get accustomed to absence from you,—till I get weaned. I know more of you now than I did in the former period of our correspondence, and therefore I love you more, and feel an interest in all that concerns you. How often I have thought of you since we parted, and how often wished I could just see you, if it were but for a minute! Yet we do meet, in spirit. In the mornings at our appointed time, and at other seasons, I have rejoiced to be able to commend you to the Father of Mercies; and though He needeth not to be told what His people require, yet I felt a pleasure in being better acquainted with your circumstances, and, therefore, better able to spread them before the Lord. How delightful the thought, that He is able to do for those we love, exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think!

"The time we spent together did, I trust, bear some record to heaven. This makes it pleasant to reflect upon. I hope I shall be improved by it. I have certainly seen more of my own faults and deficiencies, and I am sincerely anxious to improve. Help me, my dear friend, by your counsels, as well as by your prayers. The Christian's is, indeed, a 'high vocation.' I am sometimes appalled when I

think of the exceeding breadth of the meaning of walking 'worthy of it, giving none offence, that the Gospel be not blamed.' After such thoughts, after my own heart has feelingly said, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' how exceeding precious is the Saviour! It is then that we especially feel His name to be a refuge, a strong tower, a hiding-place, into which alone we can flee. Then it is the soul can feelingly pray, 'Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.'

..... "I am glad that I have been able to procure you the Hymn you were in search of. In going through the numerous pieces, nay, volumes, of sacred poetry, composed by Charles Wesley, I see more cause than ever to admire the taste and judgment, both as respects poetry and piety, with which our common selection is made. Indeed, I never before could at all appreciate the work in that respect. There is another hymn on a subject which you and I both feel it needful often to refer for the strengthening our faith, which I thought would not be unacceptable to you. A sermon of the late Mr. Ward's, which Mr. A. spoke of in such deservedly high terms, also accompanies this. I have procured 'Bower's Life of Luther.' It will be an advantage to read the same period in Milner's Church History, either with it, or immediately afterwards, as there are some interesting matters into which Milner goes more into detail.....

"We have parted with dear Mr. M'Nicoll, who preached most excellently last Sunday. To use the homely phrase of your country critic, 'he left us all longing.' After all my wanderings, it seemed so sweet to sit once more in Brunswick-place Chapel; there I feel so entirely at home. The text for the day on which it was opened, 'I will glorify the house

of my glory,' was then, and has been since often fulfilled. In looking round upon it, I often think and say to myself,

‘ This is our Jerusalem,
Jehovah’s Temple and His rest.’

Yours will, I trust, be equally endeared to those who are accustomed to worship in it. I wonder that in our social prayers we did not remember this ‘second house.’ May its spiritual beauty exceed that of the former, even more than its external appearance does ! ‘ Vain indeed is the world’s grandeur,’ without this. His presence only will satisfy His people ; and as to Himself, we may ask without requiring an answer,

‘ Carest he for mortal pomp whose footstool is the skies ? ’ ” *

* The above letter refers to a subject which merits the attention of the Methodists as a body,—the poetry of Charles Wesley. None can estimate, as Mrs. Gibson justly observes, “ the taste and judgment ” of Mr. John Wesley, in selecting and abridging the hymns composing our large hymn-book, who has not examined in detail the mass of poetry from which that collection was chiefly made. But none are to suppose that Mr. Wesley has so gleaned the poetic fields of that voluminous writer, that there remains only a few ears, or only here and there a handful of good verses. Charles Wesley was unquestionably the first hymn-writer that this country, or any age, has produced. Sacred poetry, full of beautiful imagery and sentiment, we have in abundance ; but, according to a just standard, we apprehend hymns are exceeding scarce. Mr. Wesley’s object was the production of a hymn-book, suited to the taste and spiritual appetite of a body of Christians, who from the first had been trained to appreciate good ones, and wholly to reject the bald, pretty conceits of those who mistake allegorizing for poetry ; the foolish rant of those who measure zeal by noisy vociferation ; and the luscious carnality of those who mistake the “ knowing Christ after the flesh,” for spiritual communion with the Saviour. Mr. Wesley published a hymn-book which he has justly characterized in the preface, as we think, but not justly in the estimation of some, who perhaps would have ceded the palm of superior poetry, but for the doctrines, which, in our judgment, tend so greatly to elevate the

"SINCE I returned home, I have begun a course of reading on the prophecies, from which I hope to derive much benefit. I began with Bishop Hurd, and am now going through with Bishop Newton. Already I see cause more than ever to exclaim with St. Paul, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' It magnifies our Lord Jesus Christ, and the great work of redemption, when we trace more clearly that 'this is He of whom Moses and the prophets did write.' There can be no better or nobler employments for our minds than those that lead to a better understanding of the evidences of our religion; no firmer basis for our faith than knowledge; and I may add, no deeper foundation for humility; for if we were even possessed of the accumu-

poetry. Let even those who find no small amusement in that characteristic preface, if they be judges, compare the volume with any other; and say if any possess a more manly, rational, earnest explication of doctrine, or a more dignified, calm, fervent piety. Of this book Mrs. Gibson was greatly and justly enamoured; and often spoke of the spiritual profit she derived from its use. The other productions of Charles Wesley are become comparatively scarce; and though all of them possess the same image and superscription, many of them are comparatively unknown. Perhaps no better help to devotion could be offered to the Methodists, than a re-publication of his Hymns and Sacred Poems. But why not re-publish a complete edition of his religious poetry, in a style worthy of their merit; and also a selection from them, at a price which should render them easily accessible to the poor? Let the Methodists urge this, and they will do themselves honour, and confer a lasting benefit upon posterity, by making more generally known these admirable productions of an elegant and nervous poet, a suffering man, a sympathizing friend, a sound divine, and a zealous and successful minister. With the purest poetry is blended the most exalted piety; and while the religious sentiments flow through a human heart, their doctrinal standard is divine,—"Be ye holy, for I am holy." There is no fear, or sorrow, or desire, or privilege of a penitent or believer, which is not there portrayed in language at once searching, stimulating, and consoling.

lated results of the researches of the learned in all ages, we should still more deeply feel cause to say, 'Lo, these are parts of His ways; but how small a portion is known of Him!' And should we be less affected than others in singing,

'This awful God is ours,
Our Father, and our Love?'

In early life Miss Gibson read much poetry, for which she had an exquisite and discriminating taste, and in the beauties of which she greatly delighted.

She had also acquired some skill in music; of which, at one time, she was passionately fond; but this elegant accomplishment she soon laid aside, and ceased to cultivate, on account of the prodigious amount of time it required to reach or retain excellence in the art. I have heard her deeply regret the loss of the time she had consumed in this occupation, and her sense of the danger of this most fascinating accomplishment. She would anticipate with great pleasure the delights of heaven as a perfect enjoyment of sounds, which should "fill the ear," and satisfy the love of "sweetest melody."

In writing to a young female friend, she observes:—

"I SEE no reason why you should discontinue the practice of music, though I did so myself very shortly after I was brought to the knowledge of the truth. It was not, however, because I judged it unlawful, but inexpedient for me. I was so circumstanced that I could spend my time in the active service of God and my fellow-creatures. I was in health, and needed no such recreation, being able to vary my occupations and enjoyments. Your situation is very different. At present

it may be a solace, but can scarcely be a snare ; and therefore I see no objection to your practising music, until you feel it to be a hinderance to spirituality of mind. In itself it is not sinful. May the Lord give you a right judgment in all things ; and may your love abound more and more in knowledge ! To have at once a tender and an enlightened conscience, is much to be desired."

Some time after this, I find the following remarks on the same subject :—

"As to music, I have long thought that it is an enjoyment so perverted and polluted by Satan and the world, that we must be willing to forego the delightful enjoyment of it on earth, to insure our participation in its perfection above. Except in the sanctuary, or in a religious family, the Christian can scarcely ever, without scruple, indulge in it here. But there, when

‘They take their golden harps,
Harps ever tuned,’

and we hear the high praises of redeeming love celebrated by ‘ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands,’ and are ourselves blessed partakers of the great salvation, and unite in the glorious chorus, we shall remember no more the little instances of self-denial which we encountered in our progress thither ; or shall only remember them to rejoice that we were ‘counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.’”

..... “To endeavour to help those who are beginning to inquire their way to Zion, and to show my

love to my Saviour in attempting to feed the lambs of His flock, is a service in which I delight ; and perhaps young Christians are in some respects best fitted for this work. The recollection of scenes and sorrows, and dangers and deliverances, through which they have but lately passed, are more vivid than they are in more advanced stages of the Christian course. Happy are those who thus advance ; who are not, by continual backsliding and waveringness of purpose, kept continually at ‘first principles ;’ but who fix their eye steadily on the mark, and, by mighty faith in Christ Jesus, seize the prize !

“Some time ago, in reading 1 John iii. 2, ‘Beloved, now are we the sons of God ; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is ;’ I seemed to get a very impressive view of the passage ; that a nearer vision of our blessed Lord would be a means of our transformation into his image : and the improvement now to be derived from it appeared to be, that I ought to meditate more on the character and graces of my Divine Master, and to look more steadfastly at Him with the eye of faith ; and that in so doing I should be moulded into His image, and conformed to His will. The more I see of Christians, and the more I learn of Christianity, I feel more sensibly that we are only lovers and followers of Jesus, in the degree and to the extent that we possess ‘the mind that was in Him.’ Here lies the distinction. If Christians would look upon and love ‘His image there,’ rather than ‘bite and devour one another,’ the whole body would be proportionally edified.”

Miss Gibson well knew, that zeal for doctrinal truth, and active employment in promoting the spread of truth, are important duties ; and yet, by the treachery of our own hearts, even these may insensibly sap the foundations of that solemn fear which alone can lead us to save our own souls. "Truth is not the substance of salvation, but only its instrument."

CHAPTER V.

*Death of Mr. W. Smith, of Newcastle—Divine Guidance—
Milner's Church History—Study—Faber's Works—No
neutral Ground in Religion—Salvation of Grace—Entire
Holiness—Fletcher's Writings—Wesleyan Ministry—Walls-
end Colliers—Truth is of no Party—Death of Miss
Gibson's Mother.*

ON the 30th of May, 1824, Miss Gibson was called to sustain a heavy loss in the death of the venerable Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith was the intimate friend of Mr. Wesley, had the honour of being related to him by marriage, and frequently travelled with him on some of his northern journeys. A most remarkable providence in their preservation, by the opportune efforts of Mr. Smith, is recorded in Mr. Wesley's Journal, June 20th, 1774. Mr. Smith had resided in Newcastle upwards of seventy years, maintained an exemplary consistency of life, and been eminently useful in the church of God.* Miss Gibson had the honour of an intimate acquaintance with him; spent many Sunday evenings in reading to him; and, sitting at his feet as a disciple, venerated and loved him beyond any earthly teacher. A very elegant memoir was drawn up by her, which was read when his funeral sermon was preached; but unfortunately was never published. Perhaps she refused to allow that use of it; for, although a paper of considerable length, it was prepared in one day, and she said, "could not have any excellence *per se*." Her reverence for his memory never abated; and she often declared how highly she valued the influence of his

* See a short notice of his death in the Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine for July, 1824.

amiable and pious conversation, as a blessed means of leading her soul to God.

It will not, I hope, be deemed impertinent to our great object, to give her account of his last moments :—

“ You will have heard that my dear, venerable friend has joined the happy throng. He was very dear to me ; yet the Lord made me willing, yea, even glad, when the signal was given for his departure hence. Three days before his death, he said to my dear Miss Stamp, ‘ I am happy—happy.’ The same afternoon, Mr. Davis prayed by his bed-side ; and at the close, Miss Stamp asked him if he had been able to join in the petitions ; to which he replied, ‘ I enjoy ——,’ but was unable to articulate another word. He never spake more. From that time until Sunday evening, at six o’clock, when he expired, he suffered much from internal convulsions. It was a solemn moment when we saw his last faint breath drawn. It seemed as though ours had ceased too. Perhaps had our eyes been opened, we should have seen ‘ the chariots of Israel with the horsemen thereof.’ We have all, who were then present, often received his blessing. O that his mantle may rest upon us !”

The death of Mr. Smith, she expected, would remove from Newcastle a dear friend of hers ; but in this trial she displayed her wonted submission, as the following note evinces :—

..... “ WHERE her future residence may be, neither she nor I have an idea. I would not, if a wish could do it, turn my dear M. out of the way of Providence. I would feelingly adopt the poet’s language, and say,—

'Go where His Spirit bids thee dwell ;
There, and there only, thou art well.'

Like him, too, affection would half induce me to retract what faith had pronounced. But though there might linger 'a feeling in the heart, which would not let her go ;' yet still I hope that if the Lord says, 'Go,' I shall be enabled to add,

'Yet go—thy spirit stays with me ;—
Yet go—my spirit goes with thee.'

"There is a sweetness in yielding up our wills to Him, which only faithful souls can know, and which makes the sacrifice a delight. Herein the believer is a follower of Him who said, 'I delight to do thy will, O my God.' I sometimes have thought that the promise of God, 'I will guide thee with mine eye,' implied, in those who realize such a guidance, a subdued will, and a very watchful spirit, with a quick sense of spiritual influence. The servant that is so guided must ever have his eye up to his Divine Master, or he will miss of many of the gentle intimations of his will. O for more of this divine sensitiveness !"

The following miscellaneous extracts from Miss Gibson's correspondence will show her occupations, and illustrate her character :—

"WE are at present reading 'Milner's Church History' with deep interest ; tracing the little flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom, through eighteen centuries ; still seeing it among wolves ; still exemplifying the truth of that declaration, 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution ;' and still proving that 'the

world,' whether Pagan, or nominally Christian, 'will love its own,' and hate the people of God. Yet in all that period, we rejoice in the fulfilment of the promise, 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' God had in every age those who worshipped Him in Spirit and in truth; who had not received the 'mark of the beast in their foreheads or in their hands,' openly or secretly—faithful witnesses. And though they were often, according to the language of prophecy, 'clothed in sackcloth,' yet they had a joy which 'strangers intermeddled not with.' 'Their glory was for a defence; and whosoever touched them, touched the apple of His eye.'"

"Feb. 15th, 1825.

"MY DEAR —,

"How differently do I feel it needful to write to you on these subjects now from what I did three years ago! Then you were buoyant with an undefined, child-like hope. The future lay in bright uncertainty before you; every object was '*couleur de rose*.' An academical career seems, in many respects, an epitome of life. 'Dreaming of fame and fortune's smile,' you all set out imagining that life is 'the fairy thing' it seems. These hopes, these daring, and in some respects delusive, hopes, seem needful to enable you to climb the rugged steep that lies before you. But hope itself sickens and expires with many of you ere the first Alp is gained; and I have no doubt that many of those who really gain the heights of their ambition, look back with wonder upon the path that they have trod, and say,—

"Life was an upward journey then—
When shall my spirit mount again?
And years have fled, and now I stand
Nerveless alike in heart and hand!

How bright is every scene, beheld .
In youth and hope's unclouded hours !
How darkly—youth and hope dispell'd—
The loveliest prospect lours !
Life was a splendid vision then—
When wilt thou seem so bright again ?

“ I have lately gone through nearly the whole of Faber's valuable Works. He is certainly one of the most learned divines of the English church of this age. His views of the doctrine of redemption as the great and one object of the three dispensations, of Patriarchism, the Levitical institutions, and Christianity, are the most harmonious and scriptural, according to my views, of any thing I ever read. He sees through the whole, and ‘justifies the ways of God to man’ in a way at once rational and scriptural, clear of the absurdities and incongruities to which the Calvinistic view of the subject necessarily subjects its advocates. He completely demolishes Bishop Warburton's Theory, (in his ‘Divine Legation of Moses,’) so dishonourable to God, and so unscriptural, if even we had no other testimony as to the Old-Testament saints than the record of the eleventh of Hebrews. In the ‘*Horæ Mosaicæ*’ and his work ‘on the Three Dispensations,’ he goes into the meaning of a multitude of the most obscure passages both of the Old and New Testaments in a most interesting way. He displays much learning and much originality, and certainly supports his hypotheses most satisfactorily. As soon as you begin to read theology, I hope you will read his Works, and follow them up with Mr. Fletcher's. They make, in my view, a beautiful and complete whole. Their general views are the same ; and Mr. Fletcher's writings are complete where Faber's stop short, viz., on the dispensation of the Spirit, and the superior light and superior privileges of

believers under it—the grand distinguishing characteristic of the last dispensation. Into these Fletcher enters with a power and unction which only those who, like him, had experienced its plenary influence, can attain to. Faber's views of the ante-diluvian apostasy, and post-diluvian apostasy, and of the origin of pagan idolatry, are most satisfactory. But I must stop. I hope you will read for yourself. I purpose again going through Magee on the Atonement."

"THERE is no neutral ground between the world and religion. 'He that is not for Me is against Me,' says our Divine Master. Beware, therefore, of resting in good desires. These desires are given to you by the Spirit of God, for, without His influence, our evil hearts are incapable of a good desire; but these are not given to be rested in, but to be improved. They are intended to lead us to seek the possession of the blessings of religion. And what are these blessings? They are pardon and a new heart in this life; and heaven in the life to come. How many souls are ruined by stopping short in approving of religion, and thinking they desire it! This is a most successful trap of Satan's to ensnare souls. Their desires are at first genuine, inspired by the Spirit of God; but unless they lead to a diligent seeking after the change of heart which is, or ought to be, the object of desire, the soul is no safer or better for them. The desire of bodily health would never enable a sick man to perform the functions of a man in health: neither will the desire after pardon and newness of spirit enable any to lead a spiritual life. Such an one will be exactly in the situation of the person described in Romans vii., enlightened to know his bondage, but not delivered from it; whilst he who earnestly seeks

deliverance through faith in Christ, believing on Him with the heart unto righteousness, is brought into the state described in chapter viii. He is made a child of God, enjoys the witness of God's Spirit within him that he is such, and walks no longer after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Read these two chapters with earnest prayer, and you will, I trust, perceive, and O that you may fully apprehend, my meaning. O let nothing draw you from attending to your soul's interest. All else, business and wealth and earthly love, are trifles, compared with the soul's salvation. In a few days—in a few hours—they may be absolutely nothing to us. We may be in eternity. But then the things of religion are but, as it were, beginning to be important. Are they momentous now? How much more then! O consider, when you are wavering between profit and piety, or between pleasure and piety,—for such times are felt by us all,—consider then our Lord's question, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Yet for how small a part of the world's possessions, or pleasures, or good name, is the soul often madly bartered! I well know that present things, even trifles, exercise a great influence over our earthly natures. Yet if, in the moment of temptation, we pray to God for strength, we shall be enabled to overcome. To the weak, however, it is safer to fly than to fight. Men act and think without ever appealing to reason or common sense, much less to Scripture, in what concerns God and religion. David brings it as a charge against the men of the world in his day, that they thought God was even such an one as themselves. But they do not deal with him truly, even if that false rule were right. God Himself asks by His prophet Malachi, 'If I be

a Father, where is mine honour? And if I be a Master, where is my fear?' He reminds them that they gave Him titles of honour and respect, but offered no suitable services; and tells them that earthly superiors would not receive such mockery, though they could only judge of such hypocrisy by actions; much less could He who tries hearts as well as conduct,

“‘In the majority of instances of indecision in religion,’ observes the eloquent biographer of Urquhart, ‘the evil is to be traced to erroneous ideas of the Gospel, inadequate impressions of Divine authority, and a want of that firm and decided principle, which, wherever it exists, will conquer trivial and even considerable difficulties. Providence is frequently pleaded as an excuse, while its arrangements are only putting our sincerity and principles to the test. As he who observeth the clouds will not sow,—so he that will not go forward in doing the will of God till all difficulties are removed out of his way, will always find something to hinder him.’”

For one who was waiting at the pool-side for the descent of the Angel of the Covenant to trouble the waters, she expresses the deepest anxiety; and in her exhortations fully declares her views of that great cardinal truth of experimental theology, “By grace are ye saved through faith.”

“I HOPE and trust that long before this reaches you, you will have been enabled to cast your soul entirely upon the merits of the death of Christ; to cast it in simple faith—in a desperate venture,—knowing and feeling that you can do nothing toward your own salvation, and that you have nothing but sin and misery to bring unto God. He receiveth such. He waiteth to be gracious. He will, in the

moment that you thus believe, write a pardon on your heart. He will give you the Spirit of Adoption whereby you will cry unto Him, 'Abba, Father.' He will shed His love abroad in your heart. Rest not short of this. It is the will of God that you should enjoy all the blessings of redemption, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I know nothing of human composition so calculated to excite this faith, and to instruct you in the way of getting it, and its blessed effects, like that 'Address' of Mr. Fletcher's. O with what feelings of earnestness, of self-abasement, of faith, of joy, did I read it seven years ago! It was providentially sent to me on the day after I received a clear sense of pardon. I can never forget the feelings with which I read that part of it on the 178th page, beginning, 'And O what will thy believing, enlarged heart experience in that day of God's power!' All these feelings are, or will be, yours, my dear, if you do but continue to pray earnestly and expectingly.

"There are many of our hymns which I think you will find very expressive of your feelings; the 85th, 95th, 96th, 160th, 186th, 202nd, and many others. May the Spirit of God accompany them to your heart, and enable you fully to enter into their meaning, and experience all the blessedness of the man whose iniquity is pardoned, and who feels that the burden of sin is removed! Blessed be God for having imparted unto you even these painful feelings. They are the precursors of that peace of God which passeth all (mere natural) understanding. That is communicated by the same Spirit, when we believe in Him that justifieth the ungodly. All is from God, the Giver of every good desire, the Author of true repentance as well as of saving faith."

The following letters will exhibit Miss Gibson's views and character in several important points; particularly in reference to the great doctrine of Christian holiness,—the twin-doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. There is not a more hopeful token in the state of the general church, or of individual professors, than a growing regard to these glorious privileges of Christian believers. Of the nature and reality of the Divine Witness, Miss Gibson was adequately instructed by that Spirit who is promised to all believers in the various characters and offices which He sustains to the church of Christ. She had felt, in a moment, the Spirit of bondage supplanted by the Spirit of adoption; and that at a time when she knew nothing of the doctrine as set forth in the creeds of our churches; and when she did not even perceive, that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, to free him from condemnation, and attest that he is now a child of God,—and as a Spirit of life and power to enable him to fulfil the law of righteousness,—he is none of Christ's. The Lord accomplished in her things she looked not for. Thus her doctrinal views on this point were not derived from the school of education, but of experience: Flesh and blood had not revealed these things unto her; but her Father who is in heaven. In the same school she learned, that power over sin is no longer retained than while we maintain our union with Christ. That faith in His blood which originally frees us from the curse of the law, is the bond of our union, and therefore the medium of our constant reception of the Spirit of Christ, both as a Comforter and as a Sanctifier. Miss Gibson experimentally knew, that "faith in the atonement is as much the turning-point of a new character, as it is the turning-point of a new hope; and it is the

every point, in the history of every Christian believer, at which the alacrity of Gospel obedience takes its commencement, as well as the cheerfulness of Gospel anticipations."

The glorious privilege of the Christian believer is strongly expressed when the Apostle says, that by the indwelling of the Spirit of life, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us; especially when it is remembered, that as he had been proving that while in a state of condemnation our sinful passions are only exasperated by the restraints of the law; so he now shows the converse of this,—the blessed state of him who, freed from the law of sin and death, now walks not after the flesh, either in its desires, or trusting in its weakness; but after the Spirit, having a new heart, and almighty help.

"Whether perfection ever be our attainment or not," says Dr. Chalmers, "it ought always to be our aim." For "it were selfishness under the guise of sacredness, to sit down in placid contentment, with the single privilege of justification. It is only the introduction to higher privileges."

Miss Gibson clearly saw that this was her privilege, to keep the law of love,—to have the love of God perfected in her,—so to walk in the light as to have fellowship with God, and know that the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth from all sin; and thus writes:—

"AND now, my dear —, to your questions and remarks on sanctification. The doctrine was quite new to me, until mentioned by a dear friend who shortly after died suddenly, though not until she had experienced this grace. I then knew nothing of religion by personal acquaintance, though I loved it, inquired after it, and was being prepared by the Spirit of the

Lord to be made a partaker of its blessed influence. My mind had not, however, been warped by the reasonings of men on this point; and the doctrine seemed to me so plain, so scriptural, so consonant with the Liturgy of that Church of which my dear Miss Milner and myself were both members, that I acquiesced in it as soon as it was propounded to me. When, by the death of that friend, the Lord brought me to himself, and placed me among the children, when I was longing to apprehend all that for which I was apprehended of Christ Jesus, this high privilege was again set before me by my dear and valued friend, Mr. W. In about two years after I was justified, (that is, above three years ago,) having, during a great part of that time, been most earnestly seeking the blessing, I believe I was enabled so to yield myself up to the Lord, as 'to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' The Spirit of God witnessed to the work with a clearness not to be disputed. I felt that emptiness of self, and those longings after the fulness of God, which cannot be described. I cannot exactly say how long this state of things continued. Sometimes when I remember that I was almost unfitted for the ordinary avocations of life, being scarcely able either to eat or to sleep, I am ready to doubt whether, at least so far as excess of feeling is concerned, it could last for any length of time. Be this as it may, through ignorance of many things connected with this doctrine, and some unscriptural expectations concerning it, my faith wavered, and I gradually lost the evidence of it. Still, however, I was enabled to retain a degree of knowledge and of power which I never before had. At various periods during the last three years, I have believed that I had the witness of this blessing;

but never, I think, as I had it at first. My faith has oftened wavered through the inconsistency of some, the unbelief of others, as to the attainability of this grace, and the fewness of those who even profess experimentally to know any thing of it. This was inexcusable in me. My mind has during that period often been so occupied with other feelings, that it was not sufficiently at liberty for attaining or retaining this blessing. I can, however, testify that the very hope is purifying, and that my religious experience has ever risen or fallen with my views on this point. I think I am now grounded in the belief of it. I trust I have obtained much more clear and scriptural views of it than I had three years ago ; and I long to know with all saints what is the height, and length, and breadth of the love of God. In that time I have seen and learned much of human nature ; of course much of its weakness and depravity. My time-taught spirit, ‘ pensive, not severe,’ has learned to judge more cautiously with respect to others, more humbly and diffidently as to itself, and to rejoice more tremblingly.”

“I THINK I see more and more the necessity of keeping before us the true, scriptural standard of religion ; not measuring ourselves by ourselves, or by others, but by that only safe rule. I feel in myself a continual tendency to depart from it, and I see myself continually coming short of it. Nature and Satan would often persuade me that there is another, a pleasanter, road to the kingdom. How needful I find it at such times to inquire after the old paths, and to listen afresh for that heavenly voice to say, ‘ This is the way, walk ye in it.’ The memoirs of excellent Christians entered into rest, which from time to time enrich our valuable Magazine, are often

specially useful to me. Even the short notices of the death of those of whom it is only said, they consistently served God for so many years, are often a great encouragement to me. 'This God is my God,' my soul would say on such occasions. He will be 'my guide' also, 'even unto death.'

"I think, my dear C., the only lesson I am learning with any degree of success at present, is that of my own ignorance, dependence, and helplessness. This makes Christ precious; but on the whole it is a subduing, rather than a joyous, experience.

"With this I send a tract on repentance, with which I have occupied some of my leisure hours. I purpose sending it to the Wesleyan Tract Society. I have just purchased a copy of 'Osterwald's Version of the Geneva Bible,' by way of keeping up my knowledge of the French tongue, without cost of time; and I find it valuable in another view. Its rendering often elucidates the text. The three variations in the forty-fifth Psalm noticed by Mr. Lessey on Sunday evening, as preferable to our version, I found given according to his critical remarks in this version."

"I THINK, my dear B., if there is any mark of growth in grace in me, it is that of an increase of charity. This has been painfully and slowly learned by an increased acquaintance with our fallen human nature. The views I have had of my own evil heart, has been a chief source of this knowledge. I trust it has wrought in me some little degree of humility also, and a desire to abstain from rash judging and rash speaking. The example of our beloved — has often come before me with force and profit on these points. O that I may henceforth be more earnest in taking heed to my ways, that I sin not with my

tongue! Whilst I write this, a word of David's occurs to me, 'Who can understand his errors?' It is indeed a deep and difficult science, painful to learn, and only to be learned of our Divine Master. I do not think that I ever prayed so frequently and so earnestly for Divine teaching in all things, as I have lately done; I feel myself so ignorant, so unable to decide, or to act rightly as of myself. Continue to aid me by your prayers, my beloved B. I am at present deliberating matters of great moment..... O that I were meet for the kingdom, and gone to it! I am subject to those little ailments which mental exercise never fails to bring with it, and of which I am likely with my sensibility, in a world like this, never to want. But it is all well. I would not exchange

'The pangs those feelings give,
Secure in joyless apathy to live.'

"LIKE you and my dear C., I find so much to do, that I am obliged to write and read much less than I have been wont. But I am endeavouring to fill the station in which my Master has placed me, often remembering that He himself came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. When I am weary I think of His words, 'The night cometh when no man can work;' and this incites me afresh to diligence in the brief day of life, and youth, and health. O to be found faithful in a little! Feeling as I do the imperfection and nothingness of all my performances, how precious is that all-atoning blood in which they and I may be washed continually, and presented acceptable before God! Yes, my dear friend, I am persuaded that we may both see more and more of the excellency and suitableness of the Gospel-plan of salvation. O to be more deeply

acquainted with all its healing, purifying, vivifying power! I think I desire this; and I hope I can with humble thankfulness say, that I do prove somewhat of it from day to day; and that I feel little union of spirit with any but those who seek to walk in the narrow, the most excellent way. This knits my heart to you and our dear —— beyond most that I meet with; and I look forward to seeing you both with proportionate desire. ‘Jesus hath many that desire His crown, but few that partake his cross,’ says Kempis. This is true at all periods of the church’s history; but never more than in a day of much religious profession, and much worldly conformity. I feel it needful to watch here, and to be very select in my company. Our earthly erring nature is so easily inclined the wrong way, that I feel a great need to keep as far as I can from what would draw it aside after vanities which do not profit. How is it with you, my beloved friend?”

“I AM sure you will find in Fletcher’s Works a treasure of Divine wisdom, doctrinal, practical, and experimental. They will, in a profitable way, put you in possession of the leading points in debate between the Calvinists and Arminians. He was a man eminently fitted for the difficulties and dangers of controversy; for he had a head full of knowledge, with a heart overflowing with love. I wish all who hold Arminian sentiments would read them, that they might be ‘able to give to every one that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear.’ My sentiments were the same before I read them as they are now; but I was greatly confirmed and instructed by them. Indeed, I do not know that I ever derived so much real spiritual im-

provement from any other human works. His mode of illustrating the Scriptures, in quoting them, always seems to me an exemplification of what Solomon says of 'words fitly spoken,' that they are 'like apples of gold set in pictures of silver.' Always read Mr. Fletcher's Works with prayer, and I have no doubt the same Divine unction which accompanied them to my mind will accompany them to yours. Tell me as you go on how you like them. It is of great importance, especially in the outset of a religious life, to get right views of doctrine. They have a powerful bearing on experience and practice. It may seem to some to be of little moment what your creed is ; and so it would, if notions were every thing in religion. But it is the practical tendency and results of doctrines that make them important, and make it needful that professing Christians should have a right faith ; and should know the grounds of it, and embrace it on conviction and examination ; otherwise they will be liable to be 'tossed about with every wind of doctrine,' and lie at the mercy of every specious arguer respecting the most fundamental truths. But let nothing divert you from the experimental part of religion. If our creed were as correct and scriptural as that of an apostle, unless we felt these truths as well as knew them, we are unsaved."

TO MRS. T. W.

"Newcastle, March 7th, 1826.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

....."ON the 27th of January, it was seven years since the Lord justified me freely by His grace, and 'called me to be a soldier.' How much of His patient love has he manifested since that day! How little did I then know of the power of inbred corrup-

tion, the allurements of the world, or the devices of Satan ! Ignorant and confident, like Peter I was ready to say, ‘ Lord, I will follow Thee to prison and to death ! ’ Thank God, I have been kept from openly denying Him ; but I have learned that, though my armour was good, I had not proved it ; and that it were well for those who are but putting it on, not to boast as those who are putting it off. Blessed be God, He has helped me through the manifold dangers of seven years ; and I can still, by His grace, say, ‘ Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee ! ’

“ In —— we have one of the most truly valuable Ministers that a church can be blessed with. His views of Christian doctrine are sound, and deep, and clear. His knowledge of experience is extensive. His talents good, and sedulously cultivated : nothing showy,—all solid. None of those vapid and inconclusive argumentations which, in young preachers, are so common ;—starting difficulties which they cannot answer, satisfactorily at least ;—raising ghosts which they cannot lay. I am glad to hear that you are equally pleased with ——. Indeed, I believe, that, taken as a whole, there is not such a body of Christian Ministers as ours is, under heaven. O my dear friend, I often think what manner of persons ought Methodists to be ! for surely there are no people so privileged, so taught, so warned, so hedged in. It is indeed a mercy in this time, when the foundations of the hopes of many are destroyed, to have ours fixed on those things which cannot be shaken. O that we may, as a nation, learn true wisdom by the judgments which are abroad among us ! I see these providences, as you do, to be the judicial consequences of those sins into which, through pride and fulness of bread, we had fallen.....I am endeavouring to

learn continually and practically to believe that all our concerns are well and wisely ordered. We are all journeying to one home. There, at least, I trust we shall meet. 'In life or death,' as Montgomery says, 'we shall meet again.'

"Ever believe me, most affectionately yours,

"JANE GIBSON."

"I HAVE just returned from Carville, whither I went yesterday, and was much edified by attending Mr. Reay's class, which indeed was one chief object of my visit. Often while hearing these simple-hearted people declare their Christian experience, I exclaimed within myself, 'What hath God wrought!' 'Of stones he hath raised up children unto Abraham:' Men, who without religion never would have had two ideas, declaring their experience with a precision and propriety worthy of divines; and with the energy, the zeal, and the simplicity of the primitive Christians. What an ennobling principle religion is! an agency on the mind and soul of man, really performing what alchemists sought in vain to do in metals—changing all into gold!"

"I HAD a long conversation with —— last night. Like all who get a religion worth any thing, he must renounce all for God. He sees this, and the struggle will be great.

'Wealth, honour, pleasure, and what else
This short-enduring world can give,

must be laid at the foot of the cross. Lord, enable him to count all but loss. He is aware that he cannot even identify himself with the evangelical party, so called, in the Establishment. He is no Calvinist. If he loves truth, I have clearly set before him he

must be of no party. He must bear the odium of being an enthusiast and a fool from the Arminian party,—the men of learning and of reason in the church; and he must be willing to be accounted a holder of false doctrine by the majority of pious people, and professing people, and narrow-minded people in the Establishment. It will be a glorious and blessed victory if he is enabled to overcome all these, and his own evil heart besides, by the blood of the cross!”

At length the hour of agony which had been contemplated by Miss Gibson many years before as the most distressing that she could ever experience, arrived. Her mother, after an illness of only a few days, was taken from her.

“MAY 7th, 1825.—Since my last entry here what momentous and trying events have occurred in our family! My dear and invaluable mother was, in five days, brought from perfect health to death. She expired on the 25th ult. at a quarter before four in the morning. In these seasons of deep trial, Thou, O Lord, hast sustained me! My dear mother was, I trust, enabled to lay hold on Christ during her illness, as her Saviour.”

CHAPTER VI.

Mrs. Gibson's Marriage—Removal to London—Mr. Gibson sails for Trieste—Mrs. Gibson returns to Newcastle—Mr. Gibson is shipwrecked at Montego-Bay—Extracts from Mrs. Gibson's Diary, in reference to the melancholy Event—Singular Impression of a Passage of Scripture on the Minds of three Persons—Prepares for a Voyage to Rio Janeiro—Sails from Shields—Extracts from her Journal.

THE death of Mrs. Gibson placed the subject of this memoir at the head of the family, with new and varied duties. She felt the importance of her situation, and sought and obtained the grace needful to the right discharge of her responsibilities.

About this period she was addressed on a subject which involved consequences most important to her future life. In listening to proposals of marriage from Mr. Gibson, she evinced the same care to ascertain the will of God, and only to move as the pillar led, which distinguished every event of her life. Having become satisfied with such indications of Providence as she deemed sufficient, on the 21st of September, 1826, she was united in marriage to Mr. Gibson.

When Mrs. Gibson had obtained her father's consent, she made the following entry in her journal :—

“MAY the Lord give his blessing ; and if our union should take place, in His name may we set up our banners ! O Lord, I beseech Thee, fit us both for the proper discharge of every duty arising out of that sacred connexion. Let all our works be begun, continued, and ended in Thee ! Amen !”

In reference to the day of her marriage, she observes : " My mind was kept in a sweet peace during the whole of that eventful day, and I trust the Lord was present to bless us."

Her conduct on the day of her wedding was marked by that calm sobriety which arose from the conviction that she was acting under the approving smile of her Heavenly Father. They immediately set off for London ; and attending at St. George's chapel on the Sabbath, the first text she heard preached upon was, " Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil ?" This was the commencement of my acquaintance with Mrs. Gibson ; and we soon formed a friendship which I trust shall be resumed and perfected in that

" blessed clime
Where life is not a breath ;
Nor life's affections transient fire,
Whose sparks fly upward and expire."

The above passage, from that time, was hid in her heart, formed a frequent subject of her meditations, and was often referred to in our intercourse. In making kind inquiries after me, in a season of affliction, she says, " We remember him in our prayers when we, 'burdened, for the afflicted sigh.' I still think of what I call my wedding sermon, preached eight years since last Sunday. I doubt not he and I have both preached it over to ourselves many a time since."

It was intended, when Mr. and Mrs. Gibson left Newcastle, that they should return and settle there ; but business seemed to require their residence in London. To this, as the arrangement of Providence, Mrs. Gibson submitted without a murmur. She

immediately afforded every assistance in her power to her husband; and was constrained, by her zeal for Christ, and benevolence to man, to devote all her spare time to the welfare of two or three religious and humane institutions. Especially did she afford help to the Guardian and the Strangers' Friend Societies, because she found they most needed her personal services; and, much as she loved retirement and meditation, she preferred the apostolic rule, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Mr. Gibson having purchased a new ship for the West India Trade, of which he took the command, on the 8th of December, 1826, sailed from London for Trieste, and Mrs. Gibson returned to Newcastle.

Her residence in London was a new scene of trial and painful experience; but the separation from her husband was the greatest of her conflicts of faith and patience. To leave her native town, where she had ever hoped to reside, and a place so associated with all that was dear to her mind and heart, to go forth not knowing whither she went, as a stranger in a strange land, was indeed a trial of faith. But she had learned to look upon earth as a strange country, and to dwell in tents. God was not ashamed to be called her God. She often said, that, whatever might be the circumstances which should result from her marriage, she felt confident that she was in her providential path; but this conviction, strong and clear as it was, in no wise lessened the poignancy of her feelings in her separation from her husband, or in any other respect.

When she returned to Newcastle in the character of a wife, she showed the same desire to perform the

duties of her new station, that she had manifested in all others. What she did not know, she commenced to learn; and devoted herself to the discharge of her responsibilities with the energy and zeal which became a Christian wife.

The birth of a first-born is always an event of intense interest. The first rush of new feelings, and the deep conviction of new and awful responsibilities, instinctively prompt, in Christian parents, the fervent prayer of Abraham: "O that Ishmael might live before Thee!" But the pleasures of such an acquisition, a new kind of proprietary, and the tumultuous feelings of alternate hopes and fears, too generally stifle those religious emotions, and exclude those religious acts, which are appropriate to events so momentous as the birth of an immortal mind, and so near an approach to the gates of death. At the time of the birth of Mrs. Gibson's first-born, Mr. Gibson was in the West Indies. No one therefore will be surprised that her mind should be painfully exercised during that season of sorrow and danger. Yet the Lord was her refuge; and her gratitude to God for His gracious interposition and cheering presence, was such as became a woman of faith and sobriety. Writing to me soon after this period, and referring to the similar circumstances of a friend, she observes:—

"WE can both sing of mercy and of judgment. Unto Thee, O Lord, will we sing. I trust and believe that we have both resolved, in the strength of grace, henceforth to behave ourselves wisely in a perfect way, and to walk before our house with a perfect heart. I am sure you will rejoice with me, as I do with you, in this new instance of the goodness

of God.....My feelings also are parental ; nay, they are maternal,—a word which you cannot fully comprehend, but which dear Mrs. W. can help you a little farther into the meaning of. But our circle of duties is enlarged too. This I feel to be an important consideration ; and where I see so many mighty have fallen, I tremble. Already I feel all my fortitude called into action in the performance of little things which to it are unpleasant, though salutary ; and find it sometimes hard to pursue the even, I will not say the noiseless, tenor of my way. The news will not be received by my dear husband until his arrival at Trieste, whither I expect he is now on his passage. Time is passing on, and I am looking with hope and joy to the period of our meeting. With the holy martyr, I comfort myself in the thought, that,

‘ Be the day never so long,
At last it ringeth to even-song.

.....I also have got other employment, and therefore have read little lately, except books on the management of children, &c. I have, however, just finished the Life of that man of God, David Stoner. I think it one of the most edifying pieces of Christian biography that has appeared for a long while. It certainly does Mr. H. much credit in every respect. I must henceforth, I believe, be much a woman of one book, and chew the cud of my former labours. I shall still, however, be glad to hear what is doing among those who do read and write. I feel delighted and almost surprised to find that, as circumstances call me to it, I can accommodate myself without a painful effort to all the lowly and often tedious occupations of a mother. I see it to be one’s highest praise to be useful, and to serve one’s generation.

according to the will of God. But I cannot get my mind so recollected and fixed on heavenly things whilst in my ordinary employments, as I used to be able to do when otherwise employed than in nursing. And then the fatigue and watchfulness which attend it, leave me so weary that I am seldom fit for any vigorous exercise of devotion. But I see that, whatever be our outward circumstances, hinderances strew all the way to the kingdom ; and the promise is only to him that overcometh. I want more self-denial to enable me to persevere."

Mr. Gibson reached Trieste in safety, but after a most severe passage, on the 10th of January, 1827 ; and on the 7th of April sailed for Kingston, Jamaica. During this time Mrs. Gibson continually heard of the good providence of God towards him ; but the whole season was so sickly and stormy in the West Indies, that she had many fearful apprehensions respecting her beloved husband, as every arrival from Jamaica brought some mournful tidings of the loss of ships by shipwreck, their capture by pirates, or the loss of their crews by the malignant fever, which then raged to a fearful extent throughout the Island of Jamaica. On the 10th of July, Mr. Gibson sailed from Kingston for Cuba. On the next day, the chief officer, carpenter, and three of the sailors, took the yellow fever. The same night, it blew a gale, which lasted for several days, and the ship drifted considerably to leeward of Port Royal. On the fourth day the carpenter died ; the others, through the mercy of God, were restored ; and on the thirteenth day Mr. Gibson, being completely worn out by fatigue and anxiety, never having had his clothes off during the whole time, took the fever him-

self, and became quite delirious. It was most providentially ordered, that the chief officer by this time was so far recovered as to be able to take the command; and being within sight of Morant Bay, he immediately bore up for that place, in order to obtain medical advice for Mr. Gibson. In a few days, by the blessing of God, he was considered out of danger; but was still so weak as not to be able to stand alone. Being anxious to get on to Cuba, he was carried on board on the 26th of July, hoping, by the time the ship reached her port of destination, to be able to resume the command; but about nine o'clock that evening, they were standing in for land to take advantage of the land-wind, when a sudden squall from the South-East took the vessel; and being nearer the shore than the master expected, and the night being very dark, before the sails could be taken in, the ship struck with a tremendous shock upon a reef of rocks. The squall was succeeded by a gale of wind which lasted all night; and the sea beat most fearfully over the ship.

Mr. Gibson, who had but a few hours before been carried on board not convalescent of a fever, was obliged to rise from his bed, and take the command; and that so instantly as not to be able to dress. Finding they were upon rocks, he expected she would go to pieces before day-light; but the vessel being new, she held together until morning; and by the assistance of the negroes, at day-light, the crew and passengers were landed, and all the lives in the ship were given him for a prey.

The sudden shock thus experienced by Mr. Gibson gave an effectual check to the fever, for the time at least, although it afterwards returned with increased violence.

None but they whose hearts have been bound up in the safety and welfare of those whose business is on the treacherous waves, can conceive of the solitude with which, after hearing the above accounts, Mrs. Gibson awaited further tidings of her husband. A few extracts from her Journal will best exhibit her spirit, her faith, and humility, and patience, and how she was thus made to understand the loving-kindness of the Lord. "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand."

July 22, 1827, about three weeks after the birth of her first-born, unconscious of the perilous situation of Mr. Gibson, she writes :—

"O BE graciously present on this Thine own day with my beloved husband ! I have had many depressing feelings this day on account of our long and wide separation. My heart has been almost overwhelmed with distressing feelings and fears. O Lord, remember me in Thine infinite mercy, and 'if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' The enemy has thrust sore at me this day, that I might fall into discontent, and murmur at this dispensation of Thy providence; but I thank Thee that Thou hast succoured me. Though cast down, I am not forsaken. I will yet hope in Thee. Thou hast done great things for me. Thou hast been mindful of me, and I am unworthy of the least of Thy mercies. Let this silence every murmuring thought. Give me more humility. It is pride that excites discontent. Those who feel they deserve nothing are, or ought to be, thankful for every thing, and dare not repine at what is withheld. Least of all ought I, who am the

subject of so much grace and mercy, to be found opposing myself against Thy righteous doings. O Lord, increase my faith and patience, that I may be a follower of them who inherit the promises !

“On the 2nd instant, I had a long and most precious letter from my beloved husband, written on his passage to Jamaica. This was a cordial to my soul before entering on the hour of nature’s sorrow, and a special favour from the Lord, made ten thousand times more precious by the stamp it bore of providential goodness.....Continue and multiply Thy blessings unto him, O Lord ; and, if it please Thee, let us meet in peace, and health, and safety, and that soon ! And above all, let us meet in Thy kingdom to part no more for ever. I think I feel increased desires after that better, unchanging state. My mind is more weaned from earth than it has ever been. I trust my treasure is laid up above ; my heart is there also, and my eternal home.

“October 15th.—The last few weeks have been a season of deep trial to me. Before it commenced, the Lord by His Spirit applied a part of the 138th Psalm in a special way to my soul, to prepare me for it. The words were, ‘Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. Thy mercy endureth for ever.’ On the 19th of September, I received a letter from my beloved husband, saying that he had been ill of a malignant fever in Jamaica, and that his vessel, the Mohawk, while under the charge of the chief officer, was lost. Many merciful circumstances attended these trying events : and though I suffered most keenly, especially on my dear husband’s account, who I feared might fall a prey to the disease of the climate ;—yet I thank God,

though sorely tempted, I have been enabled to hold fast my integrity, and to believe that the Lord would cause all things to work together for good. I knew that our love to Him was sincere, though far short of what it ought to be; and I was enabled to trust in His sure word of promise. The Lord has not suffered me to be confounded. I have this day heard of my dear husband's safe arrival off Liverpool in good health. 'Thy mercy endureth for ever.' O let this dispensation be a means of perfecting that which concerneth me! I do, through Thy grace, feel quickened and humbled by it. May I be enabled to reap every benefit that Thou didst intend! May my faith be stronger and more simple! I thank Thee, O Lord, for a grain of true faith. Even the trial of it is precious; how much more the reward! May I never forget Thy mercies toward me! I feel that even the hairs of my head are all numbered."

The letter to which reference is made in the above extract was received one morning while Mrs. Gibson was nursing the infant child, whose father had not yet seen it. Her sister just then entered the room; and Mrs. Gibson said to her with the utmost composure, "The Mohawk is lost!" and handed the letter for her to read. She continued to attend to the wants of her dear infant, and having committed it to the nurse, she retired to her own room to hold communion with Him whose promise she trusted: "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me." Not a murmur escaped her lips; and although her delicate frame sustained a severe shock by the painful intelligence, and her more painful apprehensions in reference to her husband, still she could say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

Nearly a month elapsed after Mrs. Gibson heard of these events, before Mr. Gibson arrived in England. "Had I been assured," she observes, "that I was a widow, I could scarcely in the time, I think, have suffered more. Yet I was preserved from murmuring; and the Lord sustained me. He doeth all things well. May we ever be enabled to leave all our concerns in his hands; and to feel that all His dealings with us are sanctified!"

Mrs. Gibson was, indeed, specially supported by the presence and grace of God under this painful dispensation. One instance, as related by her sister, is somewhat remarkable:—

"In the course of the night after receiving the painful intelligence, as usual, it was my happiness to be with her. When sleep had departed from our eyes, the word of the Lord came to me with great power, 'There shall be no loss of any man's life, but of the ship.' I soon communicated this to my beloved sister; and to my great joy the Lord had assured her, by the application of the same passage of Scripture, of the safety of her dear husband. As a further proof of 'the tender mercy of our God,' I would mention that Mr. Gibson had the same promise given to him at the time the vessel struck. Some years afterwards, when my dear sister was referring to this dispensation of Providence, she said she considered it an instance of the abounding love of God to her; 'since,' said she, 'the promise was not applied to her mind alone, but, to remove all doubt, was previously impressed upon my own.'"

Through the whole of this painful dispensation, Mrs. Gibson exhibited the faith and spirit of the patriarch, and "against hope, believed in hope." "With weapons drawn from the divine armoury of the

word of God, she fought against her own fears and doubts, against the temptations of the enemy, and against every feeling which tended to enervate her in the discharge of present duties."

The following letter was addressed to an intimate and sympathizing friend, while Mrs. Gibson was passing through these deep waters.

TO MRS. T. W.

"Newcastle, April 10th, 1827.

"MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND,

"THE more I know of myself, and of our frail, corrupt nature, the more I see and feel that it is only through tribulation that we can enter the kingdom; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ. To perfect our patience, to subdue our corruptions, to stir up our wills, to quicken our affections, and to increase our faith, our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of these things. I have been passing through much inward conflict lately; and have felt much depression of spirits, whilst daily for weeks I have been disappointed in my expectation of hearing from my beloved husband. I have still not heard; and yet, through the grace of God, my mind is much relieved and quieted. I had this morning a very sweet view of the gracious intentions of our heavenly Father towards me in this dispensation. I saw its fitness to accomplish in me His holy will. I remembered the fervency of my infant piety, and the large and sincere though ignorant offers of myself then made to God. How often have I said, with the sons of Zebedee, 'Lord, I am willing at least to drink of Thy cup, and to be baptized with Thy baptism.' He knew my weakness, though I had no adequate conception of it;

and He graciously forbore to call for the fulfilment of my vows. He took me into His family, and carried me in His bosom, and set me among the lambs of His flock. He fed me with food convenient for me; and exercised my faith, and tried my graces, as He saw I could bear; and though he graciously forbore to call for all those services and sacrifices which my forward zeal was ready to offer, yet I see those vows are registered above; and that if I continue to be the disciple of Christ, I must expect in my measure and degree to drink of His cup. I used to expect to be perfected in every grace by an immediate impartation of it from above; but I now see, that though we are sanctified by the Spirit of God through faith in Christ Jésus, the means used by infinite wisdom for the accomplishment of this great design are sufferings: Sufferings of various kinds and degrees, suited to our various dispositions and circumstances; and suited to perfect us especially in those graces most diverse from our natural tempers; and to hinder and oppose those particular sins and corruptions to which we are by nature, habit, or circumstances, most prone. Perhaps after all, the most trying part of our necessary conformity to our Divine Master in this world, consists in those seasons of darkness and heaviness in which we have to trust in God whilst we are ready to cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!' though, unlike Him in one important point, we feel that there are indeed many causes why He might justly forsake us altogether."

To another friend she observes:—

..... "As we go onward, we learn that there is much cause for us to pray, 'In all time of our tribulation, good Lord, deliver us;' for there is much to

be delivered from *in* tribulation, besides the tribulation itself. O my dear friend, what riches of grace there are hid in Christ! He makes even the trials of His saints not only a blessing to themselves, if rightly endured, and thus they are found to His praise ;—but He also makes them the riches of His church, both in the way of example, and by preparing them, as He has been doing in your case, for more deeply feeling, and more diligently endeavouring to alleviate, the misery of others.

“ I was much struck lately with the depth, and force, and beauty, of that passage of Scripture which was made such a blessing to you ; and could not help, at the time, remarking in a letter to my brother, that the word ‘ considereth ’ had in it such a comprehensiveness of meaning as included every possible way of doing good to the poor, and yet accommodated itself to the means of every Christian. How unsearchable are the riches of the wisdom, as well as of the grace, of God ! What a field of wonder and of enjoyment in these, will be opened to the enlarged and ever-enlarging capacities of the glorified soul ! Truly ‘ it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; O that we may be daily purifying ourselves by faith ; that when He shall appear we may be like Him ! Ah, my dear friend, if you and I could live more above earthly things, it would be better with us than it is ! Those light afflictions which now weigh down our spirits, would not then have such power over us. But we dwell in houses of clay ; and our earthly nature draws us to its kindred concerns. Lord, undertake Thou for us ! ’ ”

Mr. Gibson had not been long at home, before his business-arrangements required that he should visit

Rio de Janeiro, that by personal investigation he might be better able to decide on a subject of great importance to himself and family. "He earnestly desired that his wife should accompany him; and many circumstances appeared to indicate the propriety of my dear sister's concurrence. Ever willing, nay, desirous, of walking in the path of duty, whether pleasing or painful, she immediately inquired of the Lord; and receiving, I have no doubt, light clear enough for her own direction, she immediately began to prepare for the voyage with a degree of firmness and composure which can be inspired only by the highest motives."

Intent on accomplishing the utmost good within her reach, she immediately commenced the study of the Portuguese language; for although she would have found no difficulty in conversing in French with those among whom she might be placed, yet she preferred the greater to the less means of doing good. As one of the most obvious ways of promoting the glory of God and the welfare of mankind, was to carry out the word of life, she made application to the Bible Society, in whose cause she had laboured with unwearied assiduity and zeal for upwards of seven years, for a supply of Bibles. She received a considerable number both of Bibles and Tracts, in English and in foreign languages. The result of these efforts will be found in a communication to the Bible Society, in an advanced portion of these pages.

The following extracts from letters and her Diary will manifest the spirit in which Mrs. Gibson entered upon these new and untried scenes.

"December 31st, 1827.

"I AM at present peculiarly called to live by faith. Like Abraham of old, I am going forth, not knowing

whither I go, nor what may be the will of the Lord concerning me. There are seasons in which I am ready to indulge in apprehensions about the future; but in general those seasons are short, and I am again enabled to rest in God, and to leave myself, and all belonging to me, in His hands. I feel that I am under His providential care and guidance; and this sustains me. I do not know my heavenly Father's designs; but He does: and to the faithful soul THAT ought to be sufficient. But He has oft cause to upbraid me with my little faith. If you have the Texts for 1828, please to send them. I purpose, by calculation of difference of time, always to read them about nine, morning and evening, when I think those whom I love in England may be meditating on the same portion of the word of God. And now, my beloved friends, I again commend myself to your prayers, knowing that they have often brought down blessings upon your unworthy friend."

Under date of January 24th, 1828, I find the following paper, which, after having been worn some time, is stitched into her Diary. I insert it, not only to show what spirit she was of, and how highly she regarded practical religion, but that others may be induced to adopt these rules, or frame such as may more exactly suit their own peculiar constitution or circumstances.

" Rules for daily Conduct.

"1. Let my first thoughts be devout and thankful. Let me rise early; immediately return God solemn thanks for the mercies of the night, devote myself to Him, and beg His assistance in the intended business of the day.

“ 2. In this and in every act of devotion, let me recollect my thoughts, and never give way to any thing, internal or external, that may divert my attention.

“ 3. Let me set myself to read the Scriptures, morning and evening at least ; and endeavour to impress my heart with a practical sense of Divine things.

“ 4. Never let me lose one minute of time, nor incur unnecessary expenses, that I may have the more to spend for God.

“ 5. When I am called from home, let me be desirous of doing and receiving good. Let me endeavour to render myself agreeable to all about me, and useful also, by a tender, compassionate, friendly behaviour ; avoiding all trifling, remembering that folly is sin.

“ 6. Let me use great moderation at meals, and see that I am not hypocritical in prayers and thanksgivings at them.

“ 7. Let me never delay any thing, unless I can prove that another time will be more fit than the present, or that some other more important duty requires my immediate attention.

“ 8. Let me be often lifting up my heart to God in the intervals of secret worship, repeating those petitions which are of the greatest importance, and a surrender of myself to His service.

“ 9. Let me never enter into long schemes about future events ; but in the general refer myself to God's care.

“ 10. Let me labour after habitual gratitude and love to God and my Redeemer ; practise self-denial, and never indulge in any thing that may prove a temptation to that which is evil.

“ 11. Let me guard against pride and vain-glory ;

remembering that I have all from God's hand, and that I have deserved the severest punishment.

“ 12. Let me frequently ask myself, ‘ What duty, or what temptation, is now before me ?’

“ 13. Let me remember that, through the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, I am, I hope, within a few days of heaven.”

Miss Gibson observes, “ For my dear sister to leave her native land, required no small degree of self-denial. In it, she was surrounded by her family, whom she loved most intensely, and by whom she was no less beloved ; by a circle of friends, to whose happiness she contributed in a large degree ; from a lovely infant, six months old, she must separate, with all the uncertainty of ever seeing it again on earth ; and, above all, she was about to leave the land in which the light of the glorious Gospel shone more brightly than in any country on the face of the globe. My dear sister well considered these things : she counted the cost ; but being convinced that this was the path of duty, she conferred not with flesh and blood. The dear child was committed to my care during the absence of its much-loved parents ; and, through the goodness of our heavenly Father, was preserved in health to see their return.”

Mrs. Gibson's father and sister, and Mr. Gibson's brother, accompanied their friends to Shields ; and Mrs. Gibson, as though fearful of the effects of too much excited feelings, took a hasty leave of them, and the vessel soon after prepared to set sail. She soon became very sick, and for some weeks was confined to her bed ; but when she was able to move, she was busy in imparting instruction to all within her reach. She had provided herself with copies of

the Scriptures and Tracts for the use of the seamen. Some she taught to read ; others she exhorted against taking the name of God in vain ; and, by her example, as well as by precept, endeavoured to make known to others the blessedness of that religion of which she was the happy partaker.

The particulars of the voyage, displaying some of the Lord's wonders on the great deep, are recorded in the Journal which she kept, though at so great inconvenience, that much of it was written in bed. Extracts from it will serve to place the character of Mrs. Gibson in a new light, and, I doubt not, afford interest and instruction to the reader.

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE FROM NEWCASTLE TO RIO DE JANEIRO.

LEFT Newcastle on the morning of Saturday, the 26th of January, 1828, in company with my dear husband and sister. The morning was fine and cheering, which, in the sensitive state of my mind, was important. The bustle of preparation for so long an absence, is happily calculated to lessen the force of those painful feelings and anticipations which rest upon the mind in the view of the eventful future ; yet, in leaving a place so endeared to me by tender recollections, both of the living and of the dead, and in parting with all whom I loved on earth, except my husband, I felt most keenly. The Lord, however, sustained me by a gracious communication of inward peace. I felt a Divine assurance that I was in the order of providence called to leave my kindred, friends, and country for a season ; and though I knew not what awaited me in the untried scenes on which

I was entering, yet I had the sure word of promise, "I will never leave Thee nor forsake Thee."

At two in the afternoon we embarked on board the Harbinger, where we found my dear father waiting to receive us. Parting with them I felt to be a sore trial. I followed them with my tears and prayers as long as I could see them. May the Lord grant us a happy meeting in our own sweet home at the appointed time!

Sunday, January 27th.—This has twice been a memorable day to me. It is nine years this day since the Lord graciously made me a partaker of the hope of the Gospel, through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ;—freely justifying me from all things wherefrom I could not have been justified in any other way. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift! How manifold have been the mercies, how unwearied the patience, how marvellous the dealings of the Lord with me, both in providence and in grace, since that day! May the review ever excite in me deep and suitable emotions of gratitude, humility, and praise!

This morning, about nine o'clock, we sailed from Shields with a fair wind. We had a most delightful view of Tynemouth Priory and lighthouse, as we went out of the harbour. Leaving my native land now indeed seemed to be a reality, and one fraught with many painful reflections; but hope whispered, "O with what joy you will hail the sight of every well-known spot on your return!" About noon we passed the mouth of the Tees, and I thought of my dear friends at Stockton, with the hope that they were presenting us before the throne of grace. Lord, I thank Thee that the communion of saints is not only an article of my belief, but a subject of blessed

experience. Do Thou, O Lord, graciously hear and answer the petitions of all who love us, and return a thousand-fold into their own bosoms.

About one o'clock sea-sickness came on, and I was obliged to retire to bed, from which I never rose until we anchored on Tuesday morning in Yarmouth Roads.

Friday, February 1st.—Left Yarmouth Roads. Sea-sickness again compelled me to take to bed, whence I was not able to rise until Sunday morning, the 3d of February, when we anchored in the Downs. It was a very lovely sunny morning, and in the course of a few hours, a breeze springing up from the north, we were again under weigh. A large fleet, which had been detained for several weeks in Ramsgate and the Downs, was liberated at the same time, and contributed to enliven the scene. Every variety of vessel, from the stately frigate down to the Spanish felucca, was in view; and the sail past the North and South Foreland, Deal, Sandown, and Walmer and Dover Castles was most delightful:—a more favourable opportunity of seeing this part of the lovely coast of Kent I could never have had.

Friday, February 8th.—Left the Downs with a fair wind, which continued all Saturday, and on Sunday we got clear of the Channel.

Monday, 11th.—In the entrance of the Bay of Biscay we encountered a violent gale of wind, which lasted twenty-four hours without intermission, accompanied by rain and hail, and heightened from time to time by heavy squalls. The wind was fair, but being so boisterous, and such a tremendous sea running, we could not take advantage of it. To those who have never experienced a westerly gale in the Bay of Biscay, it is impossible to convey any idea of the

fearful war of elements which we there encountered. The dreadful heaving of the vessel was such, that to me every lurch seemed as though it would have laid her on her beam-ends; whilst the heavy seas that, as they struck her, made her tremble and shrink as though she had been a living thing, made me fear every moment that we should be overwhelmed in the vast abyss. What I endured in those twenty-four hours no pen can describe. I seemed to be walking "through the valley of the shadow of death." It was indeed a season of deep searching of heart. Whilst I lay upon my bed in silence, "my spirit made diligent search" into the evidences of my acceptance with God, and the reality of that religion on which my hopes were founded.

To those of us who are in the habit of thinking of God, of judgment, and of eternity, it is scarcely credible that a near view of these awful subjects should come with such an overwhelming force upon the soul, as I found them to do in the many hours which this storm lasted, and during which I never slept; but, pondering the past and the present, I lay expecting every moment to usher in that future which should "know nor change nor end." I thank God that the more I examined the foundation of my hopes, the more my hopes were confirmed, and my confidence increased; yet it was a trembling confidence. I did indeed feel myself shrink into nothing before Him who is terrible in holiness. O, in these solemn hours of fearful looking for of judgment, there was but one foundation on which my soul could for a moment rest,—the precious blood of atonement. Blessed be God, amid all my fears I felt and knew that I had fled for refuge to the hope set before me; and though I felt a great dread of the last struggle,

I was enabled to believe that all would be well with me. I had deep and humbling views of myself in all things. I saw that I had indeed been a most unprofitable servant in all respects; yet I thank God that, even in that hour of conflict, I was enabled to believe, on the severest scrutiny, that my profession of religion had been sincere. Truly this was the only ground of rejoicing which I found in reference to myself,—that in simplicity and godly sincerity I had had my conversation in the world, since I took upon me the Christian profession. I saw much to lament over; much weakness and ignorance; many consequent mistakes both as to myself and others; much infirmity, and many backslidings both of heart and life; still, I saw a general integrity in my Christian character, which even the light of the day of judgment, that seemed now to be dawning upon me, did not show to be a delusion. O my God, may the remembrance of that season be profitable to me through all my spared life!

I thought of all who were dear to me, in those silent hours; and O, with what feelings did I think of those whom I had reason to believe unconverted! With what agony of prayer did I beseech God on their behalf! O my Saviour, Thou who didst, I trust, inspire these petitions, answer them in the present and eternal salvation of all for whom they were offered up!

Tuesday, about midnight, the gale gradually abated; but the sea continued to run very heavy. The weather continued squally, wet, and most unpleasant, until Sunday, when it became a little finer. I was up for an hour or two on that day,—the first time I was on deck after leaving the Downs.

Monday, 18th.—Weather does not improve; sea still runs high.

Wednesday, 20th. Ash-Wednesday.—About eight this morning the wind began to rise, and shortly increased to a tremendous gale. All the horrors of what we endured in the Bay of Biscay again surrounded us. The wind was from the same quarter, and accompanied by a heavy sea. The rolling of the vessel was such as moved every thing in the cabin that could be moved while the ship itself held together. The noise occasioned by that, and the complaining of every plank in the bulk-heads which form the cabin and state-room, together with the roaring of the waves, and the howling of the tempest, and the divers strange and indescribable sounds occasioned by the tearing away first of one thing, then of another, by the heavy seas as they broke over the vessel, made such a deafening tumult of sounds as it is impossible to give any adequate idea of, to those who have not experienced it. Again eternity was before me. Jehovah, clothed in terrible majesty, seemed to have come down. “The clouds poured out water; the skies also sent out a sound: Thine arrows went abroad. The voice of Thy thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook. Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known.” I involuntarily exclaimed with Job, “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes.”

The storm continued to increase all day, and it was with feelings which cannot be described, that I saw the night close in. Still we hoped that at the end of twelve hours, which would be eight in the

evening, it might abate ; but these hopes were vain. At eight it became worse, and from that time until ten the storm was most fearful. A little before ten, the showers which before had been rain, suddenly changed to hail. Those on deck said, that almost in an instant, the temperature of the air changed to extreme cold ; and a torrent of hail descended. There had previously been some thunder and lightning ; but the thunder I did not hear, its noise being drowned in the deafening roar that surrounded me. Now it became of a more fearful character ; and whilst I lay meditating on the storm of the wrath of God, which He has declared will descend upon the wicked at the last day, two balls of fire seemed to descend upon the vessel. The lurid glare flashed upon my bed, through a sky-light window, with such an awful, unearthly gleam, as shook me from head to foot. I heard a sudden and dreadful shriek on deck, and then a dead silence ensued. The hail suddenly ceased, and the violence of the shower had been such as to produce a temporary quietness in the sea ; having an effect somewhat similar to pouring a cup of cold water into a boiling pot. It was an awful moment. The lightning was so near that it had struck the top of the mast, and, in passing downward, smote the legs of the second mate as he stood upon the deck. He was the person whom I heard shriek. By the mercy of God, however, no permanent injury was sustained either by him or the ship. From that time the gale continued much as it had been all the preceding day ; only the longer it continued, the more tremendous a sea was running. Though I was entirely confined to bed, yet for nights and days, such was the roll of the vessel that I could obtain no sleep, my head never lying still upon the pillow for a

minute. I was very much worn out ; and about four o'clock in the morning of the 21st, notwithstanding all hinderances, was just about to sink into a slumber, when I heard a heavy sea strike the ship at the after end, and immediately followed a rush of water into the cabin. I now thought that the end was come. Mr. Gibson and the captain jumped out of bed. We were in total darkness, the light being extinguished in the moment the water rushed in. I did not know the cause of the calamity, nor its extent ; nor did I then inquire. But, supposing we were all about to stand at the bar of God, I occupied myself in commending my own soul, and the souls of all my fellow-sufferers, to the mercy of our gracious Redeemer. This was the climax of all. I felt it hard work by naked faith to hang upon Christ. It was a season of sore satanic temptation. I literally shrunk from "death's cold flood;" yet, thank God, I was enabled generally through the whole, moment by moment, to look upward, and to feel His grace strengthening me. Though I walked in darkness, and had no light, I was, by His Spirit, assisted to trust in the Lord, and to stay myself upon my God. The language of my soul was,—

"Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah ! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me."

Blessed be His holy name, He did support and comfort me. At length a light came, and it was found not to be a serious breach that the sea had made. The dead lights were all in ; but one had not been properly fastened, and through it the sea had forced a passage. It was then better secured, the water baled out of the cabin, and a respite again

afforded. "Watchman, what of the night?" was the frequent and anxious inquiry made at every opportunity; and though the break of day brought no amendment of the weather, yet it was no small consolation to obtain for answer, or to make answer to one's self, as the first gleam appeared, "Behold the morning cometh;"—so fearful an aggravation of all evils is darkness.

This gale continued forty-eight hours; during which time we lost part of our rigging and bulwarks on both sides.

Friday, 22nd.—Lat. $36^{\circ} 42' N$. Weather still squally, with showers of rain, and a heavy sea washing over the ship.

Saturday.—Lat. $34^{\circ} 38'$. Weather more moderate; wind north, with a heavy roll of sea from the westward. All hands employed in repairing the damage sustained in the gales, and getting more sail set.

Sunday, 24th.—Fine weather. Sea much fallen, though still unpleasant. This day I was able to sit up during the morning service, in which my dear husband read the thanksgiving service after a storm; never having had an opportunity of gathering the ship's company for that purpose until now. In the afternoon saw Porto Santo, one of the Madeira islands, about fifty miles to the south-west.

Monday, 25th.—I arose this morning between seven and eight, for the first time since we set sail, and on coming on deck a most magnificent scene presented itself. To the north-west of us lay Porto Santo; a little to the south-east three large, barren, rocky islands, called the Desertas; and to the south-west the beautiful island of Madeira lifted its head above the clouds. The sea was smooth, and with a

gentle breeze we sailed along its coast all day, at the distance of a few miles. By the help of a glass we could distinctly discern the houses, all of which were white-washed, and contrasted finely with the dark green and purple of the woods and vineyards. One structure, about three miles from the foot of the mountains, which shelve gradually down to the shore, appeared to be a religious house of some kind. It seemed most delightfully situated. Probably it was a convent or monastery. Toward evening we were just off Funchal, the principal town. It contains a great number of houses, and we could distinctly perceive one church steeple. The air was balmy, and the whole scene such as made one think that Madeira was "an isle of the blessed;" but, alas! Popery, in all its darkness and defilement, making merchandise of the souls of men, reigns there. A fishing-boat of large dimensions, with about a dozen Portuguese in it, passed us within hail, on its way to the island. We hoped to have obtained some fish of them, which would have been very acceptable; but they took no notice of us. It is Lent, and probably the demand on the island is great. I have however heard another reason assigned, namely, that they dare not dispose of any until the priests have first selected what they choose. We hoped that some boats would have come off with fruit, as we were so near the shore; in that too we were disappointed. Next morning, Tuesday the 26th, we had a different view of the island, and of the Desertas, which still presented a fine prospect. The top of Madeira was now clear, and the clouds rested about half way down its sides. It was gradually receding from our view all day. We were steering south-west, and as the evening advanced, it totally disappeared.

Sunday, March 2nd.—Pleasant weather. Lat. 25° 50' N. After the evening service I went on deck, and enjoyed one of the loveliest moonlight views of ocean that can be conceived. The air was balmy; the waves were hushed into stillness; all was peace, where but lately all was wild war and tumult. "When the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them." I had many sweet thoughts of home, and of those who were dear to me in happy England; and many a silent, and many a vocal prayer I offered up for them, to Him who is "Lord of the heavens, and earth, and seas."

The starlight evenings have been very beautiful lately; and I have been amusing myself, and refreshing my memory, by tracing out the constellations, for which there is the best opportunity and good helps.

"Father, how wide Thy glories shine,
How high Thy wonders rise;
Known through the earth by thousand signs,
By thousands through the skies."

The planet Venus shines with such brilliancy as to occasion a track of light to be reflected on the water.

Wednesday.—The evenings continue to present a beautiful clear sky; the polar star appearing lower and lower every night.

Thursday, March 6th.—Entered the tropic of Cancer. Wind still from the south; weather cloudy. Last night we had some very vivid lightning. The wind rose to a severe gale; which, with thunder, lightning, showers of rain, and a heavy cross sea running, continued until noon on Friday, when it gradually subsided. Through the merciful providence of God, we sustained no injury. I was again entirely confined to bed until Saturday, when the weather

being moderate, and the sea considerably fallen, I was able to sit up part of the day, though far from well. Indeed I have scarcely been a day well since I came to sea ; yet I trust the Lord has, by the various trials through which He has called me to pass, been carrying on His work of sanctification in my soul ; especially by subduing that impatience which is so natural to me. Through the whole, He has graciously kept me from murmuring, or charging Him foolishly ; and I count it a great mercy that He has never left me without a divinely-inspired confidence that I am here in the order of His providence. May the gracious end of the dispensation be answered !

Sunday, 9th.—A delightful day. I count it a special favour that, amid all the stormy, unpleasant weather we have had, the Lord has always graciously remembered us on the Sabbath, and so ordered the course of things that we have never been hindered nor disturbed in the performance of Divine worship, morning or evening. My dear husband reads the liturgy, and I the responses, in which all present join with an audible voice. We brought a supply of prayer-books with us, which we lend to such of the crew as are not provided with them. After prayers Mr. Gibson reads a sermon.

This day at noon we saw a dolphin playing about the ship. It had a beautiful appearance in the water. Its back appeared to be of the finest blue, tinged with brown at the sides, and toward the tail with gold.

Monday, 10th.—This day we got a light wind from the north-east, which we hope will lead on to the regular trade-wind. We are gradually losing the beautiful serene sky of the temperate zone, and getting a dull, white atmosphere, particularly toward the

horizon. A flying fish came on board after dark ; the first I have seen.

Wednesday, 12th.—Fresh breezes from the east-north-east. At ten A.M. the sky cleared to the eastward, and we had a view of San Antonio, the north-westernmost of the Cape Verd Islands. It is high land ; distance, about forty miles.

Saturday.—The weather continues fine, and the breeze holds. The sea is rather high ; and, as we are not going with it, but crossing it, our course being at present south-south-east, the motion is unpleasant. Thank God, however, we are steadily advancing to our port. Seven weeks since we left home. I think much of those who are dear to me in my own beloved country every day, but especially on Saturdays, as on that day I took leave of my dear father, sister, and my little precious babe. O Lord, be Thou as a wall of fire round about them ; and grant, if it please Thee, that we may have a safe and happy meeting at the expected time under our paternal roof. *Dulce domum!* O, how often have I sighed, “Sweet home!” since I left thee.

All the ship’s company are employed between services, as duty admits, in reading the books and tracts which we brought with us to lend to them. May the Spirit of God carry conviction to their hearts !

Toward evening this day, the sky became more and more dull, with heavy clouds all round the horizon ; the air, as night closed in, grew more sultry, and all seemed to portend an approaching thunder-storm. I retired to rest under feelings of deep apprehension, and with fervent prayer to God to preserve and sustain me. I thank Him He did not turn away my prayer, nor His mercy from us ; and

He enabled me to wait the result in a gracious frame of confident hope.

During the greater part of the night the heavens were in one continued blaze of lightning, but especially in the eastern quarter. Toward midnight the breeze freshened, and we were going at the rate of seven miles an hour; still the air was as oppressive as ever. The wind seemed as though it came out of an oven. This continued until five this morning, (Tuesday,) when all on a sudden it dropped calm. I had been much awake in the early part of the night, but had fallen asleep toward five: the change, however, in the motion of the ship was so sudden as to awake me; and feeling the portentous calm, I lay with trembling expectation, and awaited the storm which all around indicated was approaching.

But the Lord was better to me than all my fears. We had a thunder-storm, but not of great violence, succeeded by heavy rain, which greatly cooled the air; and about eight o'clock the wind returned to the north-east, and we were again on our way in peace and safety. I have felt this a very gracious deliverance, and praise God for it. My mind was very sweetly influenced this morning whilst meditating on it; and taking up my Bible, I opened it on the thirty-fourth Psalm, which I read with a deep sense of the obligation I am under to "bless the Lord at all times, and to have His praise continually in my mouth." O my God, may the remembrance of Thy rich and unmerited mercy ever be fresh in my soul! This day continued very sultry to its close. About ten at night, a sudden squall from the westward carried away the maintop-gallant mast.

Wednesday, 19th.—Excessively hot. Several sharks playing about the ship, we baited a hook with

a piece of pork, and at noon one was taken. It measured about six feet in length. A small, dark-coloured fish, about four inches long, and a finger's breadth, was shaken off it in its violent struggles on the ship's deck. This little fish is furnished with a membrane under its mouth by which it sticks like a leech to larger fish; thus obtaining habitation and defence. I have it preserved in spirits, intending, if I am permitted to return, to take it with me. Some beautiful fish, rather larger than herrings, accompanied the shark even to the ship's side. The sailors call them "pilot-fish;" and I understand sharks are generally attended by them. Nature teaches them to resort to the company of the shark for defence, and also to shape their course so as to be safe from its attacks, as it is an unwieldy though a very powerful fish. They are also probably a means of attracting prey to the shark, who is thus repaid for the protection they derive from sailing under his convoy.

A few days ago I saw some *nautili* steering past us; also a shell-fish of the size and shape of a common periwinkle, but of a beautiful pale lilac colour. It is rendered buoyant by a tough, white, frothy substance attached to the shell, about twice or thrice its bulk,—probably the work of the little animal. One of these was taken in a bucket; and I have preserved it in spirits: also a curious little fish, which had been washed on board whilst we were about nine degrees north of the line. The sailors know it by the name of "a squib."

Thursday, 20th.—The sun crosses the equator to-day, and we are within three and a half degrees of it. The heat is very great. Light, variable airs all day, with thunder and lightning, especially toward evening. Heavy showers between ten and midnight.

Our only remaining pig was discovered to be sick this morning, supposed to arise from a surfeit, in consequence of eating of the shark which was killed yesterday, and left on deck for some time. I understand it ate as long as it could, and then lay down in the shark's belly to sleep.

Friday, 21st.—A fine day; very hot, but the air not quite so oppressive as it has been. Passed close by a vessel to-day; the first we have spoken for a month: only the second that we have spoken since leaving the Downs. It was a Swedish vessel from the Havannah, bound to Valparaiso.

March 24th.—The heat is excessive. It is an unfortunate place to be becalmed in, under a nearly vertical sun. However, the Lord sustains me day by day. The nights at sea bring scarcely any relief from the heat of the day, being in this respect worse than the land, which in the tropical regions always generates a breeze at night. The sea-water is nearly as warm as new milk. But the lightning, and the tremendous showers in the region where we now are, (between the north-east and the south-east trade-winds,) are perhaps what I feel most of all.

.....O how sweetly the Liturgy reads on the wide ocean; and with what fervency do we prefer the petitions for "the safety, honour, and welfare of our sovereign, and his dominions." O, I never knew how I loved my country until now!

Monday, 24th.—This morning a homeward-bound Indiaman, the Recovery, Captain Chapman, sent a boat to us, it being nearly calm. This enabled me to send home the former part of my Journal. The Recovery lost the south-east trade-wind this morning at four o'clock; so that I trust we shall not be long in falling in with it. There is a little breeze

now, and the stimulus which the sight of this vessel homeward-bound has given me, together with the hope of soon getting out of this region of calms and thunder-storms and a vertical sun, has put new life into me. O my God, may Thy manifold and great mercies ever lead me to a grateful remembrance of Thy name, and to an unfeigned dedication of myself to Thee !

During the last night we have passed that point at which the sun would have been vertical to us. So that to-day it is a little to the northward of us. It is a new sight to me also to see the moon in the zenith.

Thursday, 27th.—Saw a most glorious sun-rise. The rapidity with which the sun and moon ascend and descend in the heavens here, is striking to one who has never been within the tropics before. We still have very little wind ; what there is comes from the south-east, so that we hope every hour to get the regular trade-wind.

Friday, 28th.—At seven this morning we crossed the equator in longitude $23^{\circ} 40'$. We were within sight of an East-Indiaman last night outward-bound, and observed the preparation making for the celebration of the event, by throwing a blazing tar barrel overboard, which, when it had got to a suitable distance from the ship, would be exhibited as Neptune's light.

Saturday.—We have now got a breeze from the south-south-east, which we trust will continue to carry us onward. I have felt the last few days a trying exercise to faith and patience ; our passage now being lengthened out, and no progress being made, whilst we are almost becalmed under a vertical sun.

The weather is fine and the sky serene. The air is much cooler ; indeed, lightly clothed as we now are,

it is just comfortable. New constellations have been for some time nightly bursting on our view:—

“The ship of heaven, the patriarch’s dove,
The emblem of redeeming love,”

are now, with many others, strangers to our northern land, above the horizon.

This is the eve of the resurrection. O Lord, may we rise with Thee, and seek those things which are above, where Thou now sittest at the right hand of God!

We caught a dolphin the other day. It is indeed a beautiful fish. One large fin extends the whole of the back, which, in the sun, is of the brightest purple hue. The scales of both back and belly are of the most beautiful hues of gold and green, of every varying shade. The fine poetic ideas to which the dying dolphin has given rise, are certainly founded on fact.

Easter-Sunday, April 6th.—During this day we have again been favoured with fine weather for the performance of Divine service. I have seldom enjoyed a more gracious sense of the presence of God on this blessed festival, than I have done this day.

In the evening we had a profitable time whilst reading a sermon of Dr. Reynolds’s, a late bishop of Norwich, from, “He that hath the Son hath life.” Blessed be God for His unspeakable gift!

13th.—The whole of the past week has been most tedious: our passage is now becoming a very long one; and these calms and light winds here are very trying to patience. This evening a strong wind began to blow from the south-west, exactly against us. It increased to a gale, which lasted thirty-six hours, causing a most tremendous swell of the sea.

I was again confined to bed; the dead-lights were obliged to be put in; and we were again in the painful circumstances which I have so often described in my Journal: the Lord, however, again in mercy remembered us; and on Tuesday morning we had a favourable breeze, though the sea was still running mountains high.

Thursday, 17th.—This morning at seven o'clock we made Cape Frio, which is a high, rugged island, sixty miles east of Rio;—a joyful sight! The Lord be praised for bringing us hither at length in safety!

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. and Mrs. Gibson arrive at Rio—Popery in Brasil—Slavery—Climate of Brasil—Constellations—English Chapel at Rio—The Popish Priesthood—The Churches—Popery the Parent of Infidelity—St. Francisco—The gorgeous funeral Ceremonies of the Papists—No Sabbath in Brasil—Botanic Garden—Tropical vegetable Productions—Feast of the Spirit Santo—Auction for the Benefit of the Church—Festas—Corpus Christi Day—High Mass.

By the good providence of God, Mr. and Mrs. Gibson reached Rio de Janeiro on the 18th of April. Mrs. Gibson was favoured with an introduction to a Christian lady, who had been for some time resident in Brazil; and their intercourse soon ripened into friendship. Mrs. Thornton, cut off from the delights and profits of Christian communion, rejoiced in the spiritual advantages which she derived from Mrs. Gibson's counsels, sympathy, and prayers; and made an acceptable acknowledgment, by the most affectionate and unceasing kindness to one who was a stranger in a strange land. Mrs. Gibson's health, during her stay in Rio, was delicate, the climate proving very enervating to her; and tropical productions were so unpalatable to her taste, that she suffered considerable privations and inconvenience. Such attentions as were kindly furnished by Mrs. Thornton and other friends, were therefore doubly valuable.

The fervour of Mrs. Gibson's love of home could not be cooled by absence, or lessened by the contrast of the two countries. She was an ardent admirer of

the beauties of nature ; and the splendour and variety of the natural productions of Brazil afforded her the purest pleasure ; but her soul turned for its repose and happiness to the land of her nativity. Her family and friends, and the people of God, were continually before her. She has often said, she used awhile to gaze upon the bright and glorious heavens, when a clearer atmosphere made those midnight lamps shine through the depth of ether with a brilliancy unknown in these latitudes ; but the constellations were not those which enlightened our hemisphere ; and, devoid of any pleasing and powerful association, she sighed for the former heavens ; but she looked upon the sun and moon with transports of feeling, because they visit both lands. But, above all, her "soul longed, yea, even fainted for the courts of the Lord." For them she pined ; for she knew how blessed are they that dwell in His house, who are satisfied with the goodness of His holy temple.

Her letters written during her stay in Brazil, give a lively picture of unmasked Popery. Nothing can exceed the folly of its adherents, or be more extremely diverse from the principles, spirit, or design, of Christianity, where, as in this instance, it is dominant, and under no restraint of law, discipline, or public opinion. That it is not persecuting, is owing to its being but a piece of foolery,—a mere show, kept up for pastime and gaiety. There is nothing earnest in it : it pretends to no seriousness ; it proposes no religious or moral object ; and is but a puppet, the veil and the mouth-piece to infidelity. But let its mummeries be seen ; and let all men judge how imbecile, how inane, a thing Popery can become to meet the tastes of a people

fond of noise and show. Yet this is the true and only church! and its ministers alone are the successors of the apostles! How unlike the Christianity of the New Testament!

The reader will find in these letters some graphic descriptions of the country, its aspect, manners, productions, &c., which will both illustrate the character of the writer, and afford some pleasing information.

The first of the following letters is to her dear and affectionate sister, and was written a few hours after her arrival. The length of it, after such a voyage; its fulness and particularity on some matters of business,—in which Mrs. Gibson performed the service of amanuensis to her husband,—and the general information it contains, show Mrs. Gibson's peculiar faculty in acquiring, and the readiness of her pen in imparting it to others.

"Rio de Janeiro, April 18th, 1828.

"MY DEAR SUSANNA,

"THE entrance to the harbour of Rio is grand and picturesque beyond any thing I ever saw. There are a great number of islands outside the harbour, and it is shut in by mountains of every variety of shape and appearance, most of them wooded to the top. Alps on Alps seem to rise behind;—the mountains in the interior over-topping those nearer the shore. The harbour and the city are not visible until you are almost at the entrance of the former; and the view within is equally imposing and more beautiful, than that from without. There are two forts at the harbour's mouth, one on each side. In five minutes after we were under the first fort, we were boarded by three boats with officers of different

departments in the customs, by a quarantine officer's boat, and by an officer of the British ship of war which is stationed here as a guardship, and who takes cognizance of all British vessels. I am happy to say, there is no impediment to the landing of Bibles now: a few years ago they would have been burned. Blessed be God for that increase of liberty! I am happy to hear that a law has just passed allowing the priests to marry. I believe this has not occurred before in the history of Popery. It is said that the Pope has, in a quiet way, dispensed with the celibacy of the clergy. His Holiness must rule as he can on this side the water.

"The general landing-place is in front of the palace square, in which the emperor resides. The palace is a splendid building, of the same materials as the rest. On entering the city streets, however, and looking nearer, one's admiration is much lessened by perceiving that there is a want of that cleanliness which English people so greatly love. The streets are, in general, narrow, on account of the heat; and although to us it looks gloomy and confined, it is nevertheless a salutary regulation. What impressed me most of all, and wrote 'Ichabod' on all around, is slavery. 'Cursed be he that stealeth a man,' seemed to ring in my ears from the first moment of our entering the harbour; for one of the first sights we saw, before we had cast anchor under the fort, was a slave-ship just arrived; the decks crowded with poor, wretched beings; a rag wrapped about their bodies,—exhibiting in their appearance every thing that was revolting to our feelings as free-born Britons, as children of Adam, of 'one blood' with them, and especially as Christians! The vessels, for there were two of them lying near together, were dirty, miserable,

crazy-looking craft, such as one wondered had ever got in safety across the Atlantic. I had seen many manifestations of the power and terrible majesty of Jehovah whilst on the mighty deep, who, when the stormy waves arise, stilleth them with His word; and here I seemed to get a view of the amazing long-suffering of God. 'Lord, how long?' I rejoice to learn, that, after the expiration of next year, no slaves can be imported into Brazil, one of the last strong-holds for that sin; and though the prospect of the operation of that law gives a present impetus to trade, yet Satan knoweth he hath but a short time. On landing, we met multitudes of the negroes,—men, women, and children, performing every kind of menial work, and exhibiting every kind of tawdry rags and nakedness. They are computed at about ten to one of Europeans. There are some who have purchased their freedom, and some who have acquired wealth and keep a carriage. In the mountains there are, it is supposed, five or six thousand runaway negroes, who live by plunder, and often make descents upon the chateaux of the gentry and wealthy merchants, who live chiefly in the country. I have heard that in one instance, (not long ago,) a party of them plundered a gentleman's house, and carried off his wife, a young mother of a family, who has never since been heard of. They are a French family. This is the re-action of slavery.....

"However, we made our way to an English hotel in the Rua Novo de Ouvidor, the Bond-street of Rio. The Europeans seem much to affect the English mode of dress, especially the gentlemen. There are some remnants of the national Portuguese habit among elderly females. It is chiefly black; and the most striking peculiarity is a black cloth

mantle, thrown over the head, and hanging loose. It is most like a large shawl, with the corner turned in, and thus put over the head. I have been but once out since we arrived ; and, therefore, I cannot be supposed to have seen much ; and the packet being to be made up to-night, I must be brief. In my next I will tell you more of the place and people, if all be well.

“ O how much and how often we talk of you ! I used to dream about home, and especially about our late dear mother, almost every night. O how we long to hear of you all.....I have felt much consolation from the thought of the many prayers which were ascending from our happy native land on our behalf ; and many a time on the wide ocean have we commended you all to God ; and even there, our God vouchsafed to us many a sweet manifestation of His presence.

“ It is a cool season, although as hot as our hottest summer weather. We rise with the sun ; at or before six. What a Babel this place is ! The doors and windows of our rooms all open ; French, Spanish, Portuguese, English, bawled out in all directions.

“ I do, however, enjoy amid all, a gracious inward peace. Farewell, my dearest sister ! May the Lord bless thee, and keep thee ! Kiss my dear babe, and tell her to be a good child. Thank God, she is born a Briton ! ‘ For what nation hath the Lord our God so nigh to Him in all things that we call upon Him for ? ’ I have seen ‘ new heavens, and a new earth ; ’ O that I could say, ‘ wherein dwelleth righteousness ! ’ I trust, however, the Lord may have, even here, some who love Him ; and if so, I hope we shall find them out. There are plenty of crosses,

but I fear few who are crucified with Christ. I cannot read over this scrawl. Farewell."

TO THE SAME.

"Rio de Janeiro, April 26th, 1828."

"MY BELOVED S—,

"I FEEL assured that your heart is as mine in regard to anxiety about each other's welfare, and that of those who are dear to us. You are all ever present to me in affection, and are often remembered at the throne of grace. We have indeed abundant cause to praise God, as the hearer and answerer of prayer. He has been leading us by a way that we knew not, but it has been 'a right way.' He has been trying our faith, but it has been 'to humble us, and to prove us, and to do us good.' May every gracious end of His dispensation be answered in us!

* * * * *

"— is a decidedly pious man, of pleasing, gentlemanly manners. To maintain a profession of religion in this ungodly city, is no easy thing; but, by the grace of God, he has been enabled to do it for many years. Like most of the Lord's children, he has met with many trials, but they have been sanctified. One I will mention, because hearing of it, as I did, from the chief mate, on our passage, was made a great means of encouragement to me under the trials of the voyage. He, and his wife, and sister, embarked at Hamburgh for this place. It was fourteen months before the vessel arrived here. His wife presented him with a daughter a few days before they reached Cape St. Roque, the first land they made. She and her infant both died after they had been a week at the Cape; and then, being heretics,

a place could hardly be found where he might bury his dead out of his sight. However, the Lord inclined the heart of the person with whom they lodged, to suffer them to be interred in a corner of his garden, under an orange-tree.

“The length of their voyage was occasioned by having crossed the equator too far to the westward; after which the trade-wind made it impossible to get to the southward, without first going back to Madeira. Provisions failing, they were obliged first to go to the West Indies; and thus, by one cause and another, they were fourteen months on their passage. The vessel was not coppered; and when she reached Rio, the barnacles, (a species of shell-fish which adhere to ships when not coppered,) were a foot thick one upon another; so of course, her progress was greatly impeded. Mr. ——— seems to be placed here by the Providence of God, to be a light in this dark place, that the Heathen may be without excuse. He says, that if his circumstances admitted it, he does not think at present that he could return to England without neglecting his providential call. He hoists the Bethel-flag every Sunday in the harbour, if he can get a vessel to take it, which he generally can do; and there he performs service, and reads some faithful sermon. ——— is an acute, plain, downright man; speaks Portuguese like a native; has been twenty years among them, and understands their chicanery. He often astonishes and outwits the Brazilians by his quiet, straight-forward mode of doing business. They do not understand any mode of being clever, but that of deep schemes of deceit. From all that I can learn, they are a despicable people, ignorant of all that is good, and have been made tenfold worse than they were, by the number of

French who have, within the last few years, come to reside here. That nation seems to carry a moral pestilence wherever they go. They spread infidelity and iniquity here by means of their books, their prints, their manners, and their milliners. Satan may be said to have his seat here, and on one of the finest portions of God's earth too. The negroes, which are an immense population, are totally uneducated. Scarcely any can read; if any, I have not been able to hear of one. They are, as might be expected, the worst of servants; indolent, wicked, stubborn, to the last degree. I do not think from what I have yet seen, that they are unkindly treated as slaves. One good servant in England would be expected to do more than any three of them, men or women; and would do it too, or not be thought worth keeping. But the system is a system of iniquity; and, like every other departure from the way of God's commandments, brings with it a train of evils, 'confusion, and every evil work.' On this subject I must reserve much that I have to say, until we meet, if the Lord so orders it.....

"The only place in which the ark of God has found a refuge, is in his house; where the few pious people that are here meet on a Sunday evening, and hold a prayer-meeting. Mr. M. reads a sermon there also. There is an English chapel here, at which we attended last Sunday morning. There is but one service in the day; and, alas!.....thus making Protestantism to stink in the nostrils of these heathen Papists.

"Give my best love to my dear Christian friends, whom you know to be dear to me; and depend upon it, that 'where'er I roam, whatever realms I see, my heart untravelled' still returns to you all, with

an affection of which distance only increases the intensity.

“Ever believe me, my dearest S.,

“Your very affectionate sister,

“JANE GIBSON.”

The following letter to a beloved relative, exhibits a full-length portrait of the follies and superstitions of Popery, in that land of darkness and the shadow of death.

“*Rio de Janeiro, May 3rd, 1828.*

“MY DEAREST * * * ,

“THOUGH I expect it will be several days before this letter leaves Rio, yet, in order to have time to fill the sheet, I begin it now ; knowing that you will be anxious to hear from us at length from this new world. There is indeed much that is new to me, of which I can give you but a meagre account in the scope of a letter.

“The climate in this part of Brazil, at this season, is the finest that can be imagined. The thermometer in the shade, in the middle of the day, is about 80. I have not seen it higher since we landed. It is a fact which, perhaps, you may not have heard stated, that the greatest heats in the tropics are not felt exactly when the sun is vertical to a place, but when it is advancing and receding within a few degrees, and the rays fall in an oblique direction upon it. As there is next to no twilight in these regions, the moonlight in this fine, clear, serene atmosphere, is very beautiful and delightful. The moon, you will be aware, ascends much higher, and of course more rapidly, in the heavens, than with us. The milky-way too, in the southern hemisphere, is much brighter

than in the northern; but I do not think that the constellations which are invisible to Britain, are so beautiful as those with which we are familiar; nor do they contain so many stars of the first, or even of the second, magnitude. By far the most interesting, and I think as striking a constellation as any, is the Cross. I have been told that, when it first becomes visible to Popish vessels on their way to the southward, a feast is held, and many idolatries are practised. I have not noticed any of the planets since we arrived here; but in the clear weather on our passage, Jupiter and Venus shone with such brightness as to produce a brilliant reflection on the water; and when intercepted by light clouds, silvered them with such a light, that we might have supposed the moon in her first quarter to have been concealed there.

“The first place of worship we visited here was the English chapel, the only Protestant place of worship in Rio. It is a beautiful, chaste, simple structure, situated in a quiet part of the city, and contrasts finely with the gorgeous splendour of the Popish churches. It is a four-sided building, the walls and ceiling of a pure white, without any ornament; the length about double the breadth. The reading-desk occupies the top of one of the aisles, the pulpit the other: this preserves uniformity without hiding the altar, which fills the centre. Altogether it is one of the most beautiful chapels I ever saw. I wish I could say as much in praise of * * *. A truly pious, zealous clergyman would, I have no doubt, be a great blessing here. The Portuguese, I have been told, are delighted with the simplicity both of the building and of the worship. At present, the law is banishment and confiscation of goods, to any who attempt to convert a Papist. The priesthood are, however,

falling greatly into contempt; but alas! infidelity is succeeding Popery! The emperor has taken two of the best-situated monasteries for barracks; and probably more will follow, when it suits his convenience. He sent the monks to an island across the harbour; telling them he knew of no good they did, and therefore they must make room for more useful subjects. All the finest situations are occupied by the clergy, and they possess great wealth. Their revenues the emperor has not yet meddled with. The bishop of Brazil resides here. He is a European. I use the term to distinguish him from those Portuguese who are born here, and called Brazilians. He is no favourite at court, nor, so far as I hear, among his brethren. The emperor and he quarrelled because he would not baptize and legitimatize, as they call it, a daughter born to him during the late empress's life.

“Of the venality and wickedness of all ranks and conditions of men here, I should not wish to be able to give you any adequate idea. Those who know them will say that their portrait appears without exaggeration in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. Human nature, without the Gospel, or the grace of the Gospel, is indeed a mass of corruption..... Truly, ‘the wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.’ The emperor professes to model his constitution and government after that of England; but he and his people must have the light of truth among them, before they can ever discern the excellence of the English constitution, much less imitate it with any success. I will tell you some things, which will show you something of their freedom, when I see you.

“The churches are very splendid. One we were in yesterday exceeded in magnificence any place I

ever saw. It contained eight massive silver lamps, suspended from the ceiling, of a triangular form, about two feet across each side, solid and carved; nine altars loaded with gold; and at the further end lay a waxen figure, as large as life, on a bed surrounded by angels, robed in crimson, green, gold, and every variety of gay colours, looking inward to it. It was covered with a cloth of purple and gold; and the poor ignorant devotees went up to it, one by one, and kissed the foot or the hand; and those who could afford it, dropped a piece of money into a plate placed near it. One priest, a fine-looking Portuguese, was mumbling the mass at one of the altars, and the poor creatures, who could not hear a word, if even they could have understood the language, were counting their beads, crossing themselves, and beating their breasts, in all directions. Satan does indeed triumph here.

“Popery exists here in great splendour, but infidelity has made it a thing despised by the generality of the Portuguese. I understand their infidelity is of the shallowest kind; bred and nourished by the frothy publications and foolish sarcasm of the lowest of the French writers. Many of them are quite satisfied that such a person as Jesus Christ never existed. Indeed, the Popish lords and gods are so many, that He could be well spared out of the system; and it would work just as well. If that accommodation to a prevailing opinion would serve their turn, I should not wonder to hear of it. The images of our Lord bear no proportion to those of the saints, in number; and I have been told are scarcely one to ten of the Virgin. I counted nine altars in one very gorgeous church, each of which had an image as large as life above it. The walls of that church were

entirely covered with carved work and gold. There were draperies of rich crimson damask round every shrine; and also descending in festoons from the cornices all round the church. Beside what we should call the body of the church, there are large chapels, I think I may call them, beyond, and on each side of some of them, if not of all. In one of them, the cathedral of St. Francisco de Paulo, these places are in some respects more splendid than the church itself. St. Francisco is a great wonder-worker; and on the walls of the interior and lateral apartments of that cathedral are hundreds of little boards, testifying, in the Portuguese language, the power of the saint to heal diseases, and the gratitude of the devotees for the benefits received. Beside these written testimonies, there are, for the benefit of the unlearned, a vast number of models in wax, of almost every member of the human frame, which, we are to infer, experienced a cure from this mighty saint. Heads, legs, arms, breasts, &c., many of them with large dashes of red paint on the white wax, showing, I suppose, the particular situation and extent of the wounds and diseases with which the patient had been afflicted. No female goes to church with her bonnet on. In every thing they seem to reverse the scriptural order. To avoid insult, it is necessary for strangers to put off their bonnets on entering their churches, which I did, considering it no act of sinful compliance, though I certainly grudged paying the slightest mark of personal respect towards them. Black is the usual dress in which females of every rank go to church. In Lent, it is the universal habit of all who have any ability to choose their colour. Indeed, so universal is it, that I dare say those who have but one dress take care that it shall be black. As to devotion, after

the crossing and muttering a prayer on their first entering, persons seat themselves on the various steps which cross the church in different places, as you ascend to the altar at the further end, and there they appear exactly as at a rout, chatting, fanning themselves, &c. On a feast-day, one of which we have witnessed, wax tapers of an immense size, and in great numbers, are lighted in broad day at every altar, whilst the bright sun is putting them all to shame. At the principal altar in the cathedral of St. Francisco de Paulo, I should think there were not less than one hundred tapers burning.

“My curiosity to see a funeral was gratified the other day. We were walking toward sunset in a beautiful spot to the north-west of the city, called the Campo de St. Anna, where, at the further end of it, we perceived a number of persons advancing bearing tapers. As they approached, we saw that the chief part of them had on a vest of scarlet silk above their coats, which were black. They each carried a wax taper, about six feet long, and about two inches in diameter. Among them, towards the centre, were a number of priests, in the black, flowing garb of stuff which they usually wear, with a white vestment above, something like an English surplice, only not so wide, and only reaching to the middle of the body. The material of which it is composed is muslin, rather thin, and beautifully tamboured. The border of it is entirely lace-work, perhaps a foot in width. All their white garments are of a similar kind, differing in richness according to the wealth of the church, the rank of the wearer, and the occasion on which they are worn. Some of them are as large and long as our surplices, with a proportionate increase in the depth of the lace-work. They

are made by nuns. To return from this digression : After that part of the procession which I have mentioned, came six persons dressed in the same scarlet silk dresses which I have described, bearing the corpse of a child, apparently two or three years of age. The coffin was of the same breadth at the foot as at the head ; 'more shallow at the sides than ours. The lid closed in the middle, but was turned back on hinges at each side, so that the corpse was exposed, without any covering, to public view. The coffin was covered with crimson and white, and a border of silver lace binding finished it on the outside. The corpse of the sweet infant was decorated in the most costly manner ; and as the bearers saw I wished to look at it, they politely stood still until I had satisfied my curiosity. It was the loveliest Portuguese child I had ever seen, which might be partly occasioned by the rouge with which they colour the cheeks and lips of their corpses. It was dressed in a most splendid white satin frock, made with robings of blue satin, and worked with silver in embroidery. It had on a beautiful lace cap, profusely ornamented ; and a semicircle of blond lace and silver extended across the crown of the head, intended for a glory. A large bouquet of artificial flowers was laid by its side ; and its little hands were clasped in the attitude of prayer. At intervals the procession stopped, and the priests chanted the prayers for the dead. Two immense silver crucifixes were carried before it, and boys with incense also formed a part of the procession. 'Happy infant,' said I to myself, 'who art really gone to heaven amid all this folly !' There is no appearance of mourning ; and I am told so devoid are the Portuguese of natural affection, that there is really no mourning at the death of their relations. All the

attendants on this occasion were laughing and talking as they walked, even when the priests were chanting their prayers. An English gentleman came up whom Mr. Gibson knew, just after we joined the procession; and being well acquainted with the language and manners of the place, he explained to us whatever we were at a loss to understand. He went with us to the church of the Holy Sacrament, whither they were taking the body, and, on condition of putting off my bonnet, I saw the conclusion of the show. A most splendid bier in the form of a sarcophagus, covered with gold, and resting on feet set on a slab of marble, occupied the centre of the church. On this the body was laid, the coffin open as before. The vicar now appeared. He had a large square cloth of gold damask, put on like a shawl, about his shoulders. He began the service, which lasted about a quarter of an hour. The rest of the priests joined in chanting it, accompanied at times by loud peals of the organ. The church was lighted, and all the torch-bearers before mentioned, of whom there were not less than from sixty to one hundred, stood round. Indeed, so eager are they to have abundance of wax lights, that two slaves followed the procession with long trays on their heads filled with tapers, which they light and put into the hands of any one who will carry them. After some prayers were said, the vicar walked round the corpse, and sprinkled it with holy water. He next took an incensory from a boy, and walked round, perfuming it, and filling the church with the smoke. The *Padre novo* was then commenced, which ended the ceremony; and the body was taken to the place of interment, no priest accompanying it.

“The burying-ground consists of a range of vaults

above ground ; two tiers, as though there were two rows of niches for bodies to lie in, hollowed out of the wall. An upper one was opened for this corpse. They rested it upon tressels, near the open niche ; one of the bearers took a huge knife, and slashed the satin dress in various parts, to admit the quicklime which another with a shovel was scattering over it ; whilst a third came with a large vessel, like a watering pan, filled with vinegar, and poured some over it, to hasten the decomposition by the lime. The box was closed, and put into the vault ; which ended the ceremony. The attendants were laughing and joking the whole time, saying, ‘ Ah ! she is going very fresh, and very merrily to heaven,’ &c. We were told, that at the end of every year these vaults are all opened ; the bones removed, and deposited in a charnel-house, where, on All Saints’ days, prayers are said over the whole. The vaults are then ready for the reception of fresh bodies, to be afterwards disposed of in a similar way. Funerals here, you will perceive, are very expensive. Sometimes that of a grown person will cost £300 sterling ; and such is the rage for splendid dresses, that those who cannot afford to buy will hire them for the occasion, when of course the body is stripped at the vault, and thrown in without either dress or coffin. Even the blacks would rather beg a little money to hire wax tapers with, than have their brethren interred without some show. Corpses are generally buried on the day of decease ; always within twenty-four hours they are carried to church ; although in the colder weather they sometimes lie in state, in the church, for a day or two previous to interment. It is considered highly desirable, if a priest’s habit can be procured to bury a man in. They will, I am told, give great prices

for an old one. I saw a funeral of a man in respectable circumstances yesterday. The torches, procession, &c. were nearly the same as the one I have described; only that the individuals were all clothed in black, with a cloak of white serge above, which is the dress of the church, as the scarlet silk was of the other.

“It seems there are certain laity who are brethren of each church, and who wear the dress of the church to which they belong. They seem to be something like the overseers, and select vestry, and churchwardens of the English church; only that their ceremonial duties in the Romish church are what our officers are not burdened with. They attend the host whenever it goes out; form the procession at all funerals; and, in short, seem to have a great deal of employment. They also beg for the church, standing in the dress of their order at the corners of streets, with a silver rod in one hand, and a silver dish in the other.

“The individual in the above instance appeared to have been one of the lay brethren of this church, as he was buried in the dress of their order. He had on shoes and stockings. His face was covered with a cloth; and though some lifted up the cloth and looked, I was not near enough to see it. The coffin was covered with black, (velvet, I think,) and profusely ornamented with gold lace binding. The vicar of this church had a sort of mantle about his shoulders, different both in shape and material from the one before described. It was of black velvet, ornamented with gold. The usual priest's habit was under it. All the priests have the crown of their heads shaven.

“An adult seems to require much more incense and holy water than a child; for the vicar went three times round the body with each alternately.

The holy water was poured out of an elegant silver vessel, shaped like a sauce-boat, spouted at each end. It was put, when the vicar was going to use it, into a silver vessel like the whole spout of a garden-pan ; and with that he sprinkled the body. A lay-brother gave them into his hand with great reverence, at the moment he wished to use them ; and received them from him again with equal reverence. They accompanied the corpse to the cemetery, and said some Latin prayers there also, whilst it lay upon a bier. The coffin was closed for an instant, the priests retired, and the corpse was then lifted out of it, and placed in the niche appointed for it. The coffin was carried away, and all was finished.

“ From my Journal you will have learned something of ‘ what I did during the long days at sea.’ My needle, when I was able to sit up, was my chief resource. I could not read much at a time. My dear husband sometimes read to me, and in the evenings I was often in the cabin with the chief mate, who was rather an intelligent young man. I used to talk to him, and endeavour to lead him to an acquaintance with God. I do trust beneficial results will arise to some from our voyage. Neither the master nor mate had a Bible ; and I am certain, that during the nearly twelve weeks that we were on board, there would have been no recognition of God, had we not been among them. I believe, that, before we left, most of them saw religion to be a good thing ; and who knows but to some of them it may be the beginning of a work of grace ? Lord, grant it ! I taught one boy to read during the passage ; and if he perseveres, that will be a lasting blessing to him. O my dear —, how much there is for God’s people to do in this wicked world ! But, for myself, I can only complain

that I do so little. I trust our coming here will not be useless. The people of God here are very few; and because iniquity abounds, their love has in some degree, perhaps, waxed cold. The Lord has given us favour in their eyes; and I do humbly hope that our labour will not be in vain amongst them.

.....“The Sabbath is a most important institution, which seems to lie at the foundation of all practical religion. There is no Sabbath here; but hardness of heart, and contempt of God’s word and commandments. O Lord, arise, and send some messenger to warn this guilty city before Thy judgments overtake it. I hope that before this reaches you, we shall be on our way to our own highly-favoured land; a spiritual Canaan, flowing with the milk and honey of the Gospel. Lord, increase our gratitude, as a nation, for Thy mercies! Truly ‘where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.’ For want of that, there seems a brutishness here, which hinders the nation from even perceiving truth, or wisdom, or freedom, or happiness. I am glad to find that the English here generally maintain a character for commercial integrity, far above the French.

.....“I have a kind of dread of receiving letters from home, lest they should contain some painful intelligence respecting some of you. May the Lord ever have us, as a family, under his gracious care! Ever believe me, my dearest —,

“Very affectionately yours,

“JANE GIBSON.”

To her friends in Stockton Mrs. Gibson writes:—

“*Rio de Janeiro, June 14th, 1828.*

“MY BELOVED FRIENDS,

.....“WE are now in the heart of a Brazil

winter ; but to an English constitution it is the most delightful season of the year. The thermometer is seldom above seventy-six or seventy-eight in the shade at noon ; the atmosphere serene, and generally unclouded. There have only been three or four showers of rain during the two months that we have spent here ; yet the trees present an appearance of the richest verdure. The oranges are just ripening, and they are the principal fruit in season. A few weeks ago we went to the emperor's botanic garden, about eight miles from the city. The ride to it is most delightful. It is chiefly near the sea, which forms a number of most beautiful bays in the extensive harbour of Rio. The land being mountainous, it often shuts these bays in, so as to give them the appearance of lakes ; whilst here and there you catch an opening glimpse of the immense harbour, studded with islands, all verdant ; and beyond, as far as the eye can reach, you perceive a chain of Alps, called "the Organ mountains," which are in the interior, but, over-topping the hills nearer the coast, are visible above them, and are generally capped with clouds. The road to the botanic garden, in some places, reminded me of some of the finest parts of the Perthshire highlands, only that the vegetable world is of a very different character. Many of the common flowering shrubs are very beautiful. I am getting a collection of seeds from a seedsman here, some of which I shall send you, and hope you may be able to rear them. In this fine climate, almost all the trees and plants of the tropical regions can be naturalized, the gardener's chief labour being pruning : vegetation is too rapid here. Most Europeans, however, soon lose their energy ; and therefore improvements in any department go on very slowly. The tea-plant is cultivated in the botanic

garden ; and I understand the emperor's own table is supplied from it. The cocoa-nut of this part of Brazil is a very small species ; but we saw in the botanic garden the India cocoa-nut tree. The cocoa-nut of Bahia, the foliage of which is most singularly beautiful, is common in this part. We saw the bread-fruit tree loaded with fruit ; both that which is native here, and also a species which is indigenous nearer the line ; the sago, the camphor, the wax-tree from Africa, which supplies the immense quantities of wax used here for tapers ; (it is imported in bales ;) the vinegar-tree, which yields that article by incision, as the wax and camphor yield their respective juices. The clove, the black-pepper, the cinnamon, the India bamboo, growing to an immense height ; also a smaller species of Indian cane, from which the cane-bottoms of our chairs are made ; the cedar of Lebanon, the fir-tree of New South Wales—with many others from Indian climes—flourish here as in their native land. The coffee, which is a beautiful tree, with red berries, like our hips, each berry enclosing two seeds, which, when separated from the husk, washed, and dried in the sun, is the commodity so well known to us ; the sugar-cane, the lime, the citron, the guava, the banana, the shaddock, the mango, the calibash, the lemon, and the castor-oil plant, are all common here. The grape is cultivated in the gardens of Europeans ; but it does not thrive very well ; it vegetates too fast.

“ There is not, however, in all these, any thing comparable for excellence and utility for the table, so far as my taste is concerned, to the rich variety of fruits in our own highly-favoured land.

“ And then, if we speak of the fruits of righteousness, I have not seen any, nor heard of any. The Sun of

Righteousness does not seem to shine here ; but thick mists of error, superstition, and ignorance, generate a blackness of darkness in the moral world, which chills one to look upon it. Popery and infidelity divide the land between them. The one, indeed, seems to me the natural consequence of the other ; for such is the degradation in which Christianity is exhibited in this Popish land, that, if men think at all, they must think it to be unworthy of God, and unacceptable to Him, if He be wise, and holy, and just, and good. I will endeavour to give you some account of the way in which Whitsuntide is kept here ; or, as they call it, ‘the feast of the *Spirito Santo*.’ We did not, of course, go to any of their churches on the Sunday ; but, on the numerous stalls which are placed in the streets for the sale of fruits and sweetmeats, I observed, on that day, barley-sugar made up in the form of a dove, to represent the Holy Ghost.

“On the Monday evening we visited some of the churches, one of which I will attempt to describe.

“It stands in the Campo de St. Anna, a beautiful open square at the north end of the city. The church was one blaze of light, out and inside. The cross on the spire was covered with lamps ; and innumerable wax tapers, of from six to twelve pounds’ weight each, filled the church. The walls were covered with crimson satin damask, trimmed with gold lace. The floor was carpeted ; and on the floor, there being no seats in any of the churches, the congregation was seated in the eastern fashion. There was no worship of any kind apparent. The ladies were chatting and fanning themselves as at a rout. They always go to church without any covering on their heads ; and many of them are dressed as for an evening party, except that they are mostly in black. Besides those who were

seated, there was an immense crowd of persons, who, like ourselves, went to see the show, and merely walked through the church. Near the first entrance sat some of the officers of the church, selling little images of a dove, and wretched prints of saints, at enormous prices, (for they were not worth a straw,) for the benefit of the church. But the principal means of gain connected with this *feast* remains to be told. Outside the church was erected a spacious platform. One of the walls of the church formed the back part of it; the other three sides were open, and the ascent to it was by a flight of steps in front. It was in every respect like the stages erected for the exhibition of mountebanks in England, except that it was lined and canopied with crimson satin damask. A multitude of well-dressed persons, chiefly ladies, were seated on the floor, as in the church. A band of music was in attendance. A youth about fourteen years of age sat on a raised seat in the centre, dressed in mock-imperial robes, with a crown on his head, and a sceptre in his hand. He was styled Emperor of the Feast. The object for which all this preparation was made, was an auction for the benefit of the church. The articles sold were, chiefly, cakes of various sizes, pies, flowers, live fowls, or, in short, any thing which any one gave to the church to be thus disposed of; and if gifts did not furnish a sufficient quantity, these clerical mountebanks purchased articles for sale, as they generally bring prices far above their value. The auctioneer was a bald-headed, meagre mortal, dressed in a crimson mantle. He puffed the commodities, and cracked jokes, and exhibited the things to the best advantage, to the immense crowds within and without the stage; and announced the sum bidden with a tone, and look, and

gesture, the most ridiculous that can be conceived. Imagine a couple of white chickens, with scarlet ribbons tied round their necks, handed about in this way; and I think you will be satisfied that this mode of serving the church is worthy of Satan and of Popery, and well fitted, in a variety of ways, to promote sin. The auction went on until a late hour; and on Tuesday night things were conducted in the same way; and the whole concluded by a brilliant display of fireworks, which commenced between eleven and twelve o'clock, and lasted about an hour.

“On the eve of any saint-day, of which there are many, and all of them *festas*, or ‘holidays,’ there are bonfires lighted in front of the churches, and in many other parts of the streets of the parish in which that *festa* is particularly celebrated; some churches being privileged to hold one, and some another. Rockets, crackers, squibs, and every kind of noise that gunpowder can make, forms a part of the religious ceremonies here on all occasions. The quantity of gunpowder used in their worship must be immense. Scarcely a day passes in which one is not stunned by the rockets which they let off at the church-doors at the conclusion of mass. But on festivals, which are very numerous, the noise is almost incessant, as the services are held at different periods of the day at different churches, extending almost from sunrise to sunset. Bonfires, consisting of immense piles of faggots, are also lighted at the doors of the churches at nights on great occasions. I understand the rockets were introduced into the Popish worship by the Jesuits from China; and the Chinese have certainly made a gain of it, as great quantities of such articles are imported here from thence. Little packets of the

size of a pack of cards, covered with pink paper, and inscribed with Chinese characters, are exposed on every little stall in the streets. These are Chinese crackers; on which the blacks, to whom any noise is acceptable, and the children, spend their money with as much satisfaction as our children in England have in buying apples. At the conclusion of high mass, a shower of rockets is generally let off at the church-door; foolish enough at any time; but under a burning sun at noon-day, when they can produce only noise and smoke, doubly so. At the great festivals, the churches are entirely hung, so as to cover the walls of the interior with the richest crimson satin damask, ornamented with gold. To cover the walls of churches, already as splendid as gold and carved work can make them, is as senseless as it is tasteless.

“The 5th inst. was Corpus Christi day, on which there is a grand procession of the Host through the principal streets of the city. St. George’s day, for what reason I know not, was united with it in the celebration. The first part of the procession is a military band. Then comes a man in steel armour on horseback, styled St. George’s Champion. Next appears a clumsy wooden figure as large as life, and as fine as feathers, and ribbons, and velvet can make it, which is held on a horse by two men. It carries a shield on one arm, and a spear in the other hand. This is St. George. A train of about twenty led horses, with saddle-cloths of green, studded with silver stars, said to be the saint’s sumptuary horses, close this part of the procession. Then follow men carrying rockets, which they let off at intervals. After this comes a long procession of lay-brethren belonging to all the churches of Rio, all in their various showy dresses of crimson and purple, and

blue and green, and white and black, in almost endless combinations, to distinguish them from each other, no two being alike. Each party is headed by men carrying the immense silk banners belonging to the different churches, which are also of different colours ; and, after each church's banners, come men bearing two or three large, massive, silver crucifixes. Each of the brethren carries a lighted wax taper of six or eight pounds' weight ; and though there were hundreds of them, their light could scarcely be perceived ; only showing the folly of holding a candle to the sun, especially within the tropics. Last of all, came the higher orders of the clergy, and a long line of noblemen in their court-dresses, attending a canopy of cloth of gold, under which the host was carried by the bishop of Brazil, a venerable old man, attended by two other bishops. The emperor supported the canopy on the front of one side ; and five of the first officers of state were the other bearers, all uncovered in the hot sun. I should have mentioned that, before the canopy, a bell was carried in an upright position, which gave a single knell at intervals as the bearer walked ; and between the bell and the canopy was carried a large, circular silk banner, in form like a circular tent, not stretched at the sides to its full extent : the bearers walked under it. What its signification or use was I could not learn. All the houses in the streets through which the Host passes, are obliged, by a royal order, to be decorated. This is chiefly done by satin draperies suspended from the verandahs. The streets are also strewn with leaves and flowers. The Roman Catholics drop on their knees as the Host approaches them ; but there is no compliance now required here from foreigners, except that they be uncovered. I have always had to put

off my bonnet in going into their churches ; but nothing further is required.

" We went yesterday, being St. Antonio's day, to the chapel royal, to see high mass celebrated. It is a most splendid place ; the walls are entirely covered with carved work, gilding, paintings, images, satins, velvet, gold, and silver. There was a full orchestra, consisting of a fine organ, a variety of other instruments, and a great number of singers. The music was very fine. The bishop, attended by a great number of the higher orders of clergy in most splendid dresses, performs the service. The dress of the bishop, from his mitre to his shoes, was of ' wrought gold ' upon a white ground, scarcely visible, it was so closely embroidered. Just behind where we stood was an image of the Virgin, and as the long line of priests passed it in entering, headed by the bishop, one of them stepped forward, and took off the mitre from his head, whilst he bowed to the senseless statue. It was then put on again, until he came to the altar, where the same ceremony was observed again.

' But only kindred faith can fitly tell,
Of the high ritual at that altar done.'

" All the senses were addressed ; the eye, the ear, the smell. At length, a priest in a plain black stuff habit, with a white cord round his waist, a perfect contrast to all the rest of the clergy present, ascended a pulpit, and preached extempore for about half an hour, with an energy, and eloquence, and grace, and earnestness worthy of the purest church. He was a fine, intelligent-looking person, of mature age, with a most expressive countenance, and a clear voice ; and

to those of his own faith, I have no doubt his words were 'as apples of gold in pictures of silver.' But thanks be to God, all this splendour had 'no glory' to me, by reason of that glory of simple, spiritual worship which far excelleth; and of which I had seen and tasted in our own blessed land.

"May we become a more spiritual people, giving thanks to God for all the great and high privileges with which He has favoured us!

"Continue to pray for us, my beloved friends.

"In great haste,

"Yours affectionately,

"JANE GIBSON."

CHAPTER VIII.

*Mr. and Mrs. Gibson sail from Rio—Boarded by a Pirate—
Report to the Newcastle Bible Society—Popery—Slavery—
Extracts from her Diary—Communion Service—Unfulfilled
Prophecy—Providential Trial—Rev. E. Irving—The sinful
Humanity of Christ—Rev. W. Wolff and his Prophecies—
“Two Messiahs”—Erskine’s “Freeness of the Gospel”—
Ben Ezra, and the Study of Prophecy—Providential Direc-
tion—Lowth on Hebrew Poetry—Death of an Infant—
Maternal Association—Revival of Religion in the West of
Scotland—Journal.*

MR. and Mrs. Gibson sailed from Rio on the 24th of June, 1828. Mrs. Gibson’s dread of the sea, after the storms and dangers of the passage out, was so great, that she observed more than once, that nothing but the impossibility of reaching her native land and her own sweet home, without recrossing the ocean, would have induced her again to venture upon the treacherous deep. But there was now added, to the ordinary difficulties and dangers of a sea-voyage, the probability of falling in with some of the pirates that then infested the western Atlantic. It appears that their vessel was boarded by a pirate; but they mercifully escaped the savage cruelties which those barbarous freebooters were accustomed to inflict upon their victims.

A letter from Mrs. Gibson, to one of her friends in Rio, details some of the circumstances of their voyage, and portrays her calmness in the time of their peculiar trials, “in perils of robbers,” in addition to “perils of waters.”

TO MRS. THORNTON.

"Newcastle, September 20th, 1828.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"WHEN we had been about a week out of Rio, the principal part of which time, the wind, being contrary, was driving us to the southward, a suspicious sail was discovered about eight in the morning making toward us. Presently they fired a gun for us to lie to, which you may suppose we were no way inclined to do. It, however, chased us, and as it drew nearer, Captain S—— and Mr. Gibson were more and more persuaded that it was a piratical vessel. Under these circumstances you will readily suppose, that in my nervous state I felt much alarm; yet it was only at first. During the three hours that elapsed before it reached us, I was enabled to regain my composure, to stay myself on my God, and to feel that peace which He hath promised to them that trust in Him. The name of the Lord is indeed a strong tower, into which His people may continually run and be safe. I dare say you remember, that, whilst we were talking of the dangers of the passage, I told you that I dreaded pirates more than storms; always feeling with David, that I would rather fall into the hands of the Lord, whose mercies I know to be great, than into the hands of men. It was a remarkable circumstance that the Moravian text for that morning, (July 3rd,) and which we were about reading when the vessel appeared, was that very verse, 2 Sam. xxiii. 14. The Lord, however, only intended it as a trial of our faith. When the vessel came alongside, contrary to the practice of pirates, they sent a boat to board us, instead of demanding one from the *Endymion*. This in some measure relieved us, and the officer who boarded us was an Englishman. They professed to

be Brazilians, who had been cruising to the southwards; but their whole conduct, and some slips of the tongue, showed them to be Buenos Ayres privateers. The vessel, however, being English, and all the cargo shipped under English names, and no warlike stores being on board, after a strict scrutiny of the manifest, Captain's papers, and letters, they left us. From that time we had a pretty favourable passage, though generally light winds, which made it rather long. I was chiefly confined to bed for the first three weeks, and during the principal remaining part of the passage was weak and poorly; yet the Lord graciously fulfilled to me His word of promise upon which He had caused me to hope. He gave me, from day to day, faith and patience; and on the seventy-first day after leaving Rio, we were blessed with a sight of the British coast. We providentially met with a vessel bound to Sunderland, off Portsmouth; and had an almost miraculous passage of forty-eight hours to that port. From thence we reached home the same night, the twelfth of September, being eighty days from Rio. We ought, indeed, to praise the Lord for His goodness toward us. A tremendous gale came on just as we reached Sunderland, which proved very fatal on that coast. Surely, my dear friend, could I relate to you the extraordinary circumstances connected with our embarkation in the *Bellona*, and our whole passage in it to Sunderland, you would indeed say, 'The Lord hath done great things for them.' The compass of a sheet of paper would not, however, admit of my going into particulars. I can only call upon you to unite with us in praising the God of all mercies. May our spared lives be dedicated to His service; and may we glorify Him in all things! We experienced much of His

spiritual presence during our whole passage from Rio. Truly in His favour is life ; and His loving-kindness is better than life itself. I was, however, often the subject of distressing temptation ; Satan taking occasion, from my bodily and mental weakness, to harass me with unbelieving thoughts and fears, sometimes on temporal, sometimes on spiritual, subjects. The Lord, however, did not leave me in his hands, but enabled me from time to time to look up to Him for an increase of faith ; led me to the Rock that was higher than I ; gave me fresh applications of the precious blood of atonement ; and assured me in reference to temporal things, that ‘having given to me His Son, He would with Him also freely give me all things’ needful for life and godliness.

“We had service twice every Sunday on board the *Endymion*; and though I did not find Captain S—— all that I hoped, yet as he was in no way wanting in attention to us, and as we were not at all dependent upon him, we were as comfortable upon the whole as we should have been in any vessel probably where there was no knowledge of God. May the Lord grant that some of the good seed sown whilst we were among them, may take root downward, and bear fruit upward to His praise and honour and glory !”

* * * * *

Previous to the voyage, Mrs. Gibson suffered some painful apprehensions of the influence of a vertical sun ; but He who knows how to temper “the wind to the shorn lamb,” graciously interposed in this respect also ; which she gratefully acknowledged.

“I WAS much struck with the way in which the Lord graciously averted the suffering I anticipated,

whilst we were under a vertical sun. Having endured so much on the passage out whilst in these circumstances, and knowing that my present situation would tend to increase the inconvenience, I greatly dreaded our approach to the sun. But He who knoweth our frame, mercifully ordered circumstances so, that I experienced no inconvenience from it. We met the sun while we were under the north-east trade-wind, which blew a strong, cool breeze during ten days; and thus the Lord rebuked my unbelieving fears, and accomplished to me, in a literal sense, that promise, 'The sun shall not smite thee by day.' "

When Mr. and Mrs. Gibson went to Rio, as Mrs. Gibson had been long and well-known to the Committee of the Newcastle Auxiliary Bible Society, as a zealous labourer on behalf of that Institution, she was requested to take out a number of Bibles and Testaments in Portuguese and French, for circulation in Brazil. The success of her efforts was not great; but on her return, she presented a Report to the Committee, which furnished so much interesting information respecting the religious state of that part of the territory of paganized Christianity, that it was read at the public meeting. Omitting some parts, the topics of which have been anticipated in her interesting private communications, I insert an extract of that Report as exhibiting her deep interest in the kingdom of Christ, and her discrimination of the evils of Popery and slavery.

It appears that the Portuguese eagerly sought for the Scriptures; and assembled in each other's houses to hear them read; but it was only to gratify their curiosity, and to inform themselves of the history of

the Bible, and its general design. They then abandoned the Scriptures, and even the wealthy refused to pay for them.

“POPERY exists in Brazil in its most debased and debasing form. No moral end appears even to be aimed at by it. Every thing that can gratify the eye and the ear, all that can please the corrupt nature of man, is studiously provided in their gorgeous churches, and their frequent and gaudy festivals. Popery may well be styled, ‘The master-piece of Satan;’ yet true to his character of ‘the old serpent,’ he is cheating his servants of the power and authority which he promised them, as the reward of promoting his delusions, by bringing in infidelity, which has already undermined the Romish faith, greatly lessened the influence of the priests, and is yearly diminishing the voluntary contributions of the people to the support of its costly superstitions. Of the grossness of these superstitions, it is impossible to give any adequate idea, to those who have never witnessed them. The Jesuits, who are now banished the Empire, introduced fireworks into their worship, which are exhibited in great perfection and profusion on the eves of their saint-days, and other numerous festivals.

“These fireworks are largely imported as an article of commerce from China; in which country I understand, the Jesuits learned the practice, which they, with their accustomed policy, transferred from pagan idolatrous worship to that of the Romish church. The burning of Judas on Good Friday, which is a ceremony of much pomp, frequently costs a sum equal to £300 sterling. This expense is chiefly incurred for fireworks, and dresses for the puppets.

“They have indeed, ‘gods many and lords many.’ In the chapel royal I counted even altars, all of them most splendid, erected below the images of different saints. Judging from the number of her statues, one might suppose the Virgin to be the chief deity. A most superstitious veneration is paid to her name; so much so, that in some families Maria is the first Christian name of every daughter, and is always used in addressing them.

“To the blacks, the show and noise of Popery is most acceptable; and the system now owes its chief value, in the estimation of many of the Portuguese, to its use in keeping them in quiet subjection. The numerous holidays, and the opportunity these days afford for displaying their finery, to which they are passionately addicted, forms a strong bond of union between them and Popery. The Portuguese act upon that maxim, ‘Ignorance is the mother of devotion.’ Their slaves are totally uneducated, although there are excellent laws for the promotion of education in the new code of Brazil. These laws, like many others of which they make their boast when occasion serves, are, however, in fact but a dead letter. There are no executors of these laws. Corruption pervades every department. ‘Every one looketh for his gain from his quarter; yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.’ Assassination, as in all Popish countries, is frequent, and passes unnoticed. The blacks are generally employed in these deeds of darkness; and no wonder if they sometimes thus revenge their own wrongs.

“All foreigners are tolerated by law in the exercise of their own religion; but, for any attempt to proselyte Brazilian subjects, the penalty is banishment and confiscation of goods. The only place of worship in

Rio, besides their own churches, is an English episcopal church, where there is service every Sunday morning. The few pious English residents also hold a meeting in a private house, every Sunday evening. The English merchant before mentioned hoists the Bethel flag on board an English vessel every Sabbath morning, and performs Divine service in the same way as is done in the floating chapels at home. He and another pious friend also visit the English hospital in the afternoon, when there are any patients. With these gentlemen I deposited the Bibles and Testaments committed to my care. They regretted that the proportion of Bibles was so small, as they had little hope of disposing of Testaments; those who want the Scriptures at all generally wishing to have the whole; and the blacks, who occupy the room of the poor in this country, being unable to read. An application was made by a Portuguese before we left, to purchase the whole of our Bibles at an under price; but Mr. M——, suspecting that the individual was commissioned by a priest to buy them up to destroy them, declined treating with him.

“I am sorry to say, that the most bitter enemy to piety that is known in Rio de Janeiro, is a fellow-subject of our own,—an Irishman, who was brought up a Protestant, but, renouncing the faith, has become a Romish priest. He is a man of talent, and is in high favour with the emperor, having been English preceptor to his daughter, Donna Maria da Gloria, the infant queen of Portugal, lately arrived in this country. Such is this man’s sense of the debased state of morals in Brazil, and the tottering condition of the Romish church through the prevalence of infidelity, of which the French are most zealous apostles, that, though he declares that he will, as far as

lies in his power, counteract all Mr. M——'s attempts to spread the knowledge of the truth, yet he says he is not afraid of the influence of the Bibles that come into Brazil, but of the French infidel writers. These, he well knows, are more congenial to the depravity of the hearts and lives of the people, than a book which would show them their own iniquities as well as the corruptions of the Romish church ; and would require, as a first step toward conformity to its holy, self-denying precepts, that they should turn from their evil ways.

“I was glad to hear that a somewhat better state of things prevails in Buenos Ayres, than in Rio de Janeiro. Some pious English ministers reside there. Civil and religious liberty seem better understood, and education is not only legislated for, but promoted.

“I cannot close these imperfect notices without a few remarks on the state of slavery in Brazil.

“It affords me pleasure to say, that the Portuguese in general treat their slaves well. This their personal appearance sufficiently testifies. Among the many hundreds, nay thousands, which I saw in the streets of Rio carrying burdens, most of them uncovered to the waist, I never observed the marks of the whip on one ; and I have been informed by persons long resident, that the condition of slavery in the country is in many respects better than in the city. The legislature has framed many excellent laws for the protection of slaves ; and though these are not fully acted upon, yet they have their use. It is in the moral consequences of slavery that its heinousness is fully developed ; and these are as awfully exhibited in Brazil as they can be in any part of the world. To the vices of the savage state, the slaves have

added many of the most degrading evils of civilization, without having attained any of its ameliorations of the condition of humanity.

"They are generally thieves and liars; without natural affection; and so exceedingly indolent, that one household servant in England, whether male or female, will do three times as much work in a day as most of them can be made to perform.

"It is not, however, on the slaves only, but on the slave-owners also that the evils of the system act. The worst passions of human nature are fostered and strengthened by it; and though I saw nothing of that cruel treatment, concerning which so much is often said at anti-slavery meetings in England, yet I saw written as with a sun-beam upon the whole system, in its individual and national consequences, 'Cursed be he that stealeth a man.'

"I am, gentlemen, with much respect,

"Your obliged servant,

"JANE GIBSON."

The love and faithfulness experienced in the succession of mercies vouchsafed to Mrs. Gibson during her absence from home, were felt as new obligations to devote herself to the service of God. She returned to England with increased love to Him, and with a more implicit confidence in that word and promise, which had so often proved "the anchor of her steadfast hope" in the hour of peril. The habit of referring every thing to the word of God was so established, that it seemed as natural to her as the reference of the architect to the principles of his art; or that of the philosopher to the general laws of nature, and axioms of science. She inquired of the Scriptures as her oracle, and never failed in receiving an answer

that was sufficient for practice. "Those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." Her conviction of the immediate and direct superintendence of Providence, in all that concerns God's saints, was deepened; for the lessons which the journeyings and mercies of the Israelites in the wilderness were designed to teach that people, "uncircumcised in heart and ears," were effectually impressed on her mind, as the very alphabet of practical religion. The increasing cares of her family led her to devote a larger portion of her time and energies to domestic duties. This was, in an important sense, a new era in her life; and from this period we are to mark the growing maturity of her personal piety.

The following is the first record in her Journal, after her return from Rio.

"THE mercies of the Lord, during the whole period of our absence, were many and great. May a deep and thankful sense of them ever pervade our souls; and lead us to a more humble, faithful, and obedient walk with God! I suffered much during the voyage, both out and home; yet I record it to the praise of the grace of God, that He endued me daily and hourly, with that measure of faith and patience which my circumstances required; and so mingled every drop of the bitter cup with the sweets of His love, with the precious assurance that I was in the order of His Providence, suffering His will, as a part of that sacred discipline by which my sanctification would be promoted, if I suffered according to the word and will of my heavenly Father, that whilst I tasted the wormwood and the gall, I felt that they were as a medicine to my soul.

"To record all the mercies, spiritual and temporal, which I experienced in that period, would be to write out a detail of every hour; to say nothing of the unknown grace and mercy of the Lord, which only eternity will reveal. O Lord, may it be engraven upon my heart by Thy Spirit; and may my gratitude ascend in one continued flame of love to Thee for ever! Amen.

"On the 12th of September, we reached Sunderland in the *Bellona*, having left the *Endymion*, in which we returned from Brazil, near Portsmouth, on the 10th of the same month. We arrived at Newcastle at ten at night.

"My rejoicing was indeed with trembling as we approached my father's house. But, blessed be God! he was better to me than all my fears. We found our beloved family in health and comfort, our dear child much improved, and all our concerns better than I had ventured to hope. The Lord has in a special way answered our prayers that He would prepare us an habitation.

"Write all these mercies on our hearts, O Lord, I beseech Thee!"

The Providence which delights to honour them that honour it, opened the way for Mrs. Gibson's residence in Newcastle, in the midst of her relations, early associates, and religious friends. She often mentioned the attachment she felt for her house, because she believed it to be the home provided by God; and to enhance the mercy, it adjoined that in which her father and sister resided. "We were thus," says Miss Gibson, "brought into closer and more frequent intercourse than we could, under any other circumstances, have been. How much happiness and

spiritual edification also have resulted from our near residence, I cannot estimate; yet I ever have a melancholy remembrance of joys which I am never again to participate."

About three months after her arrival in England, Mrs. Gibson gave birth to a boy, who from the first was exceedingly delicate; and after a few months of suffering, nature in vain struggled against an inflammation of the chest, and the babe expired upon his mother's knee.

These events are thus noticed by her in her private papers:—

"July 10th, 1829.

"ON the 25th of April, the fourth anniversary of my valued mother's death, we entered our house in Saville Row. It brought before me many a past scene. All worldly things seem but as shadows flitting by, and leaving no trace behind. A few more years, and the place that now knows us shall know us no more for ever. Lord, enable us while we live, to live to Thee! I feel much encouraged in entering our new habitation, by the firm belief I have, that it has been prepared of God for us in answer to prayer.

"During the last seven months, I have passed through many and various, and some trying exercises of both mind and body; yet have experienced abundant mercy from God. The absence of the family at the sea-side affords me a degree of leisure and quiet which I have not lately been favoured with; and I thank God, that, by the gracious influences of His Spirit, my soul is quickened and disposed to profit by this opportunity of comparative rest from outward things, to obtain a deeper inward work of grace; the renewal of my soul in righteousness, and a clear,

abiding witness of the Spirit. I have been reviewing the records of the Lord's dealings with me, and am thereby enabled to thank God, and take courage; and I now resolve in His strength to press toward the mark of holiness, with greater vigour than I have lately done. O my God, vouchsafe Thy grace unto me, that I may so run as to obtain the prize. My soul panteth after conformity to Thine image, as the hart panteth after the water-brooks. O remember not against me, the coldness and sinful indifference of my past life. Pardon, O Lord, pardon all my past sins, of omission and of commission; and O establish me with grace!

“I have this week entered upon another year of my existence. O that I may have life, and have it more abundantly than I have ever yet had it! Quicken all my drooping powers! Lord, revive me in the midst of the years! I ask it for Jesus's sake!”

When Mrs. Gibson married, she gave up her public engagements, though not without, in every case, first seeing that a proper substitute was found; and she considered that the change in the character and sphere of her duties, required her whole time and energies to be spent at home. As she found opportunity by her subsequent freedom from domestic engagements, she resumed several of those offices; but her efforts in a more private way were never relaxed.

The interest which Mrs. Gibson ever felt in the spiritual welfare of all her friends, was peculiarly strong in the case of those Christians with whom she had become acquainted in Brazil. She had witnessed their manner of life, she had personally sympathized in their sorrows, and she knew their lack of the

means of grace, and the danger they were in, that, when iniquity abounded, their love should wax cold. To them, hers was "an angel visit;" and will ever be remembered as one of those special favours of the Head of the Church, by which He refreshes His inheritance when it is weary. She did, indeed, leave a blessing behind her, in the diffused savour of the knowledge of Christ. Her excellence, as an intelligent woman and an eminent Christian, was highly appreciated by that little band of Christians; and she was the gratefully acknowledged instrument of confirming and increasing their faith, quickening their zeal, and drawing still closer, those bonds of charity by which the whole family in heaven and earth is knit together, and increaseth with the increase of God.

Without strict regard to dates, I here insert a few letters, and extracts of letters, to various friends in Brazil; which will show the spiritual character of her friendship, and her interest in the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom.

The following note, written when Mrs. Gibson was at Rio, was addressed to a young lady to whom she was eventually made a great blessing in the inquiry after truth and godliness.

"Rua Direita,

"MY DEAR MISS M——,

....."I AM glad to hear that you intend commemorating the death of our gracious Lord on Sunday. May He Himself meet you at His table, and bless you. The service is very simple, and always strikes me as the sublimest part of the beautiful Liturgy of the Church of England. It is selected from the earliest services extant of the

primitive church, and breathes a most elevated strain of devotion. I scarcely know anything equal to the last anthem, beginning, 'Glory be to God on high !' I trust we shall find it a day of Pentecost.

"And now, my dear Miss M., let me entreat you to divest your mind, as far as possible, of dread and of doubt. Look unto God as your reconciled Father in Christ Jesus. The offer of pardon is 'unto all, and upon all them that believe.' All who will, may come, and drink of the water of life freely. As the remission of sins without the shedding of blood is impossible, He cleared the way between himself and a guilty world, by giving His only begotten Son, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life ;—might have it *now*. The spirit is *now* given, for Jesus is glorified, and hath received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Receive then, my dear friend, the record which God hath given of His Son. 'All things are now ready.' The work of Christ is 'finished ;' and we have only to believe, to enter into rest. The believer in Christ hath ceased from his own works, and entered into his Master's.

"I send you a hymn of the early Christians for the Eucharist. May we thus eat and drink the body and blood of Christ, and feed on Him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

"Yours, my dear Miss M.,

"Very affectionately,

"JANE GIBSON."

TO MRS. THORNTON.

" Newcastle, Nov. 15th, 1828."

" MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

" I need not assure you, that you have often been the subject of my very affectionate and grateful remembrance, since we parted ; and have not seldom been especially remembered in my feeble petitions at the throne of grace. I know that you dwell in a dry land ; but, blessed be God ! He hath promised to 'give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert ;' nay, even to 'open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys ;' to make 'the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water ;' in short, to overturn the whole course of nature, to 'give drink to His people, His chosen.' And why ? Because He hath formed His people for Himself, that they may show forth His praise. When I think of you and dear Mr. T., and the few others whom the Providence of God has placed as lights in a benighted land, it is with an earnest desire that you may so 'let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' To glorify God is, indeed, the chief end of man's creation ; and to enjoy God through an endless eternity, is the exceeding great reward which our gracious Creator hath set before us, to encourage us in the daily work of self-denial, and holy obedience, which he requires of us. O, that we had a more steadfast respect unto the recompence, taking our blessed Master for our Exemplar, who, for 'the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame !' We should then wage a more successful warfare against our enemies,—the world, the flesh, and the devil.

"I daily feel myself to need a fresh application of the blood of sprinkling, and the renewing and sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost. Help me by your prayers, my dear friend, to draw near to the mercy-seat with faith; that I may receive the supply of all my need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

"I am, through mercy, in good health, though, of course, subject to the many infirmities incident to my present circumstances. I dwell as little as I can upon the hour of trial before me. Our gracious God hath left a special promise on record, for an anchor of the soul in that exigence, that they might have strong consolation who have fled to Him for refuge from all the sorrows incident to our present sinful condition. Pray for me, my dear friend, that I may 'continue in faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.'

"I send a volume of excellent sermons, which I trust will be acceptable and useful in your Sunday-evening meetings. I have not any doubt of their meeting dear Mr. M——'s approbation, as I scarcely know any to equal them on the subjects of which they treat. I should like, when you can spare them, if you would lend them to —, and tell him that I feel a desire that he should know what we do consider good sermons; and that religion is not with us a bare system of opinions, or mere evanescent feeling; though we lay due stress on conformity to Scripture in the one, and evidences of life and energy in the other; but unless the result be holy practice, a growing conformity to the will and image of God, we count all the rest to be but 'as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.'

"I often think of you as assembled together on

Sunday evenings for worship, when we are retiring to rest ; and pray that ‘ He who dwelleth between the cherubim may shine forth ’ among you, in all His reviving and fructifying influences.

“ I am, my dear Mrs. T.,

“ Very affectionately yours,

“ JANE GIBSON.”

It was about this time, that the church began to be agitated by controversies concerning the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy, especially regarding the millennium ; new theories of doctrine, especially respecting the extent of the atonement, and the privileges of believers ; and certain moral phenomena which were declared to be the restoration of the “ gifts ” bestowed on the apostles and first Christians. Mrs. Gibson’s curiosity alone would have led her to inquire into, and endeavour to satisfy herself concerning, these strange things ; but she was influenced by a higher motive ; and her love to the truth was greater than her attachment to any party or system. It will be seen that she read Mr. Irving’s translation of Ben Ezra, as well as the eccentric productions of his own pen ; but her mind had been well disciplined by the study of such writers as Hurd, Newton, and Faber ; and she so well knew the veneration that was due to God in things revealed, and was so serious in minding the substantials of personal religion, that she yielded not to that “ vain curiosity to inquire, and over much boldness to determine, about the times and seasons, which hath been no small prejudice unto the interest of the Christian religion.” “ It were indeed,” says Howe, “ the work of another prophet, certainly, to accommodate and make application of what was spoken by a former, to a distinct

time and people. The affectation of venturing upon futurity, and of foreboding direful things, may proceed from some very bad principle or other ; from a temper that ill agrees with humanity itself ; but O, how disagreeable to the spirit of our merciful Lord and Saviour ! ” They who began by professedly interpreting, went on to prophesy ; but their pretensions were soon discredited by a vain assumption of miraculous powers.

Experimental religion, it is well known, was in Scotland almost lost sight of, amid the cumbrous orthodoxy of creeds and confessions ; when it pleased God to kindle a light which burned with a pure and steady blaze, in the testimony to the great doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, furnished by the experience of Isabella Campbell, and a few others. This was no new truth, or it had been false doctrine. The stream of vital piety in the church of Christ has ever run in this channel ; and the testimony of the wisest and best men, and the ablest divines of all churches, and of every age, corroborates the doctrine of the New Testament ; that, by whatever terms it may be defined, and how various soever the degrees of clearness, according to the different dispensations vouchsafed to churches, *it is the undoubted privilege of all believers to have a comfortable persuasion, by the testimony of the Holy Ghost, of their acceptance with God, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.* But the pious in Scotland deemed this a new discovery, the knowledge of which was vouchsafed by special favour ; and thus the gem soon became encrusted ; the wine was mingled with water. The correlative truths regarding the extent of the atonement, and the plan of salvation, were obscured by those philosophical refinements and vain reasonings, which strove to

'make them quadrate with a previous system ; and thus the simple majesty and mighty efficacy of truth was lost. However needful miracles might be for the authentication of a new revelation, they do not appear to be necessary to seal truths already possessed, and incorporated in the creeds, and experienced in the hearts, of the church of Christ. Whether those events which occurred in the west of Scotland were "signs" or not—evidences, or delusions—who shall say ? It is not probable that they were hypocritical deceptions. Whether they were originally the finger of God, and whether Satan did not, in some degree, simulate divine gifts, to delude the weak but sincere, and to scandalize the world, "the day shall declare ;" but that much of the evil was over-ruled for good, we know. They were "perilous times," and the faith, simplicity, and steadfastness of God's people was tried. "Thou hast showed thy people hard things : Thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment. Thou hast given a banner to them that feared Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."

In weighing the evidence on so great a question, I can testify to her care and candour ; and I know that she was so persuaded of the paramount claims of truth, that she was fully prepared, on being convinced, to take her share of the odium which lighted on those who maintained that new "signs" were given to "them that believed not." Her reverence for God was such, that she shrunk from limiting the Holy One of Israel ; and, as far as she knew, honestly laid open her mind to the light. Allusions to these subjects will be frequently found in her subsequent correspondence, as well as the firm, but candid, statement of her convictions, after taking unusual pains to form a right judgment.

TO MRS. THORNTON.

"Newcastle, Oct. 3rd, 1829.

"MY BELOVED FRIEND,

"YOUR very affectionate and welcome letters came duly to hand. News from a far country, concerning those in whose welfare we feel deeply interested, may well be said to be 'as cold water to a thirsty soul.' Even in the short period that has elapsed since we left Brazil, how many changes have taken place in your little circles! Yet all are mixed with mercy, and all may turn to profit, through the sanctifying grace of God. You have been attending the sick bed of friends, witnessing and soothing affliction; and you have also been a personal partaker of afflictions. Well, my dear Mrs. T., an Old Testament saint inquired, 'Whether we should receive good at the hand of the Lord and not receive evil?' And we, in these latter days, upon whom there ariseth much more light in the gloomiest season of providential darkness, than their dispensation admitted, ought to receive both in the spirit of him who says,

'Patiently received from Thee,
Evil cannot evil be;
Evil is by evil heal'd;
Evil is but good conceal'd;
And through the virtue of His blood
Shall turn to everlasting good.'

"The first sermon we heard after our marriage was from that passage in Job ii. 10. It was peculiarly applied to my mind at the time, and has often since been meditated upon and blessed, both to my humiliation and comfort; and has, even in times of trial, led me to such views of the comparatively small

measure of providential evil which I have received at the hand of the Lord, that my temptations to murmur have ended in gratitude and praise.

* * * * *

“Our heavenly Father has many more important ends to answer in His dealings with his children, than to secure to them the gaining of money. ‘The prudent man will look well to his goings;’ but if, after all due deliberation and prayer for divine guidance, God should see fit to frustrate some of our expectations, shall we dispute His wisdom or His love? O no, my dear Mrs. T., we have not so learned Christ. I believe He has been trying our faith by much of the past; and we know, on divine authority, that ‘the trial of our faith is precious, more than of gold that perisheth.’ O that ours may stand, and be purified by every test to which He shall see fit to put it; for He will ‘sit upon His people as a refiner’s fire.’ I can, with thankfulness, say that I would not part with some of the lessons I have learned in these trials for a world’s wealth. I might have learned many more, and all much more perfectly; but I am still slow of heart, notwithstanding all the lessons of His grace which I have received, and am daily receiving, in the school of Christ.

* * * * *

“My dear Mrs. T., may the Lord draw you nearer to Himself, and bless you with more union and communion with Him! He is the only centre of true enjoyment; and He is to be found in all lands. May you realize this more and more. I often feel the insufficiency of earthly good, even through its very abundance. The Lord has given me more than the desire of my heart as to outward things. I dwell in the midst of mine own people, not being

even called to forget my father's house ; yet I often feel the emptiness of all this, unless I am also walking in the light of God's countenance. Unless I feel his love shed abroad in my heart, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost illuminating my soul, all outward things are vain. I am thankful for them, but they are not, cannot be, a satisfying portion to a soul that knows God.

"But I must hasten to a close. I have answered some inquiries of dear Miss M——, as to Mr. Irving, in my letter to her, which I dare say, if you wish, she will show you. That our Lord took upon Him our fallen nature, is one of Mr. Irving's opinions ; but it is contrary to the general voice of the church of God in all ages. There seems a moral impossibility in the Son of God partaking actually of sin. God himself, so to speak, cannot do a moral impossibility. The value of the atonement depends on the immaculate perfection of the victim. But then Mr. Irving says, that He, by the Spirit of God, triumphed over the fallen nature. Ah, my dear Mrs. T., when men begin to be 'wise above what is written,' and to find out new modes of glorifying God, they immediately fall into the snare of the devil. Let us keep close to the written word. There we learn that the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.' Satan 'had nothing in Him.' He was 'the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person.' 'Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise took part of the same ;' but of their sins he could not partake. He bore the penalty. 'He was made a sin-offering for us who knew no sin.' I think the epistle to the Hebrews will fully satisfy your mind on that point. One important

correspondence between the type and the antitype in vicarious sacrifices would be lost, in receiving Mr. Irving's notion on that head. The animals could not possibly have sinned, or been in any way partakers of Adam's transgression, natural or practical. Great stress is laid, in the Levitical institutions, on their being perfect after their kind, without blemish. This thought has just struck me. I have not time to spare to follow it out; but I think it bears upon the point. Mr. Irving's doctrine on the person of Christ would lead to consequences the most dangerous. He is indeed held to be unsound in doctrine, by all denominations of Christians. If he lives to mature his views, I think he will speedily arrive at rank antinomianism, if he is not there already.

“Were his theories as to unfulfilled prophecy his only theories, it would be of less importance; and were they even proposed as such, with modesty and humility, and only occupying about a fifth rate in the scale by which sober Christians measure the importance of theological truths, however one might disagree, one could not seriously blame. But this is far from being the case. Those who are of his party make them almost the sole subject of their converse, and occupation of their time. They also endeavour to represent as nugatory and useless, all those efforts which the zeal of the church has lately made for the conversion of Heathens and Mahommedans; because, according to their views, it is the purpose of Christ to subdue the nations by the terrors of judgments, rather than to save them by the mercies of His Gospel. Their speculations thus tend to sloth, and not to exertion, and to the very reverse of Christian charity. Other evils result; one of which has lately reached us. Mr. Wolff, a converted Jew, whose name you

probably know as a Missionary to his brethren at Jerusalem, a warm-hearted man, and an ardent disciple of the new school of prophecy, has lately been preaching the Gospel in the east to some Bedouin Arabs, in this strain : ' You have now time to repent ; for the Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified for our sins by the Jews, will soon come again in glory and with great power, to reign in the city of Jerusalem, surrounded by Jews believing in Him,' &c. He (Mr. Wolff) adds, ' With great seriousness they asked me, *When will Jesus come ?* I answered them according to my most internal conviction, In a very few years.' Now, my dear friend, can we think it wise to stake the credit of Christianity, before Jews, Mahommedans, Pagans, and Infidels, on the truth of such opinions as to the personal reign of Christ at Jerusalem, ' within a very few years,' upon the accuracy of their calculations as to the time of the fulfilment of any prophetic event whatsoever ? What will be said by these Bedouins, if, after ' a very few years,' Christ should not have thus come ? This is one of the practical results of these speculations, which is certainly an unauthorized method of attempting to awaken either the hopes or fears of men.

" From another quarter we learn that Mr. Wolff has even gone further than this in his preaching, and has fixed, and publicly declared, the precise year of the ' very few ' to be 1847. From expounding unfulfilled prophecy he has gone on, as is usually the case, to prophesy. He declares that he will then be alive, and see, with his own eyes, Abraham, Isaac, &c. This needs no comment. It is going the round of the newspapers, and furnishing abundant occasion to them who seek occasion to ridicule those who are spiritually looking for their Lord, and sounding the

Gospel trumpet to alarm sinners in this and in other lands, to prepare to meet him.*

"The Catholic question is settled; but it affords small remedy for the evils of Ireland. The Gospel, received in the love of it, is the only medicine that can heal her sicknesses. One subject of agitation is done away, and that is all that can be said. Ireland continues in much the same state of faction and misery.

"It is said that a commission is appointed, to inquire into the state of the established Church. If even some of the glaring evils of non-residence of clergy be remedied thereby, it will be important. At any rate it shows a sense of evils existing, which is a condescension to public opinion of rare occurrence in our ecclesiastical rulers. But these are eventful times.

* * * * *

"Yours, my dear Friend,

"Very affectionately,

"JANE GIBSON."

TO THE SAME.

"Newcastle, Nov. 3rd, 1829.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"IN my last I omitted to notice what you say about the opinion of 'two Messiahs' being prophesied of. I have neither time nor ability to enter at large upon the discussion of this matter in detail; but would just observe that it is an old fiction. The Jews would have tolerated for a while a suffering Messiah, which they could not deny was clearly

* It is but just to say that the eccentric individual here referred to, is now dissociated from every Missionary Society.

revealed, if there had immediately followed a visible and triumphant reign of 'a glorified Messiah,' concerning whom prophecy was equally clear and full. They expected and desired a secular and conquering king; but His kingdom He declared to be 'not of this world;' not outward, but inward; righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. To obtain this dominion in the hearts of those who would submit to His government, He endured all the pain and humiliation foretold of Him. His sufferings are now fulfilled prophecy. His exaltation, and the glory that should follow, have been spiritually known by His people from the descent of the Holy Ghost. Yet we look for greater things than these, even such an abundant outpouring of the Holy Ghost, as shall accomplish results far more really glorious than the most wonderful speculations concerning the personal reign of Christ on earth hold forth,—'a coming of Christ which is not needed for any of those moral and spiritual purposes which we are taught to regard as essential to the true glory of the Redeemer's kingdom.' Though we expect only the universal dissemination of truth, and the universal prevalence of holiness, and are firmly persuaded that the power of the Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, will accomplish all our hopes in reference to the millennial reign of the Redeemer; though we believe that He will come 'the second time without sin unto salvation;' we have still enough in these anticipations to gladden our hearts, to animate our hopes, to stimulate our activity, and to lead us to be 'steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.'

"Read the second chapter of the Acts. There you will find the humiliation, and exaltation, and final

triumph of the Saviour set forth, not as of two, but as of one Christ.

"I trust, my dear —, you do not lose sight of that blessed assurance of faith which is set before us in the Gospel. Press after it, my dear friend. It is your privilege, and would be your highest consolation. It is beginning to be brought forward in Scotland, with a clearness which they have not known for many, many years, and is exciting inquiry and attention which will doubtless be profitable. They have long rested in instruction, until even that was failing: experience of the new-birth, and the witness of justification, were well-nigh forgotten. But God is raising them up teachers here and there, who know the truth. Isabella Campbell, and others, are blessed proofs of the truth and efficacy of the doctrine.

"Believe me,

"Your very affectionate Friend,

"JANE GIBSON."

TO MISS M.

"Rio de Janeiro.

"MY DEAR MISS M.,

"'ERSKINE'S Freeness of the Gospel' has occasioned much discussion; and if his leading views be extensively embraced, will, I think, produce important changes in the Calvinistic churches. This, the more thoroughly versed advocates of the system perceive; and consequently anathematize the whole. I dissent from him on many points; but he is an excellent man; and I have no doubt that those who receive, even with his metaphysical peculiarities, the grand and blessed truth that 'God is love,' and cordially embrace it, and the free, blood-bought salva-

tion which that love originated, will be made happy in it, and preserved from all fatal errors. That blessed truth is emphatically, the Gospel; and by whomsoever it is promulged, even though much 'wood, hay, stubble,' be built upon it, the foundation is sure, and God will witness to its truth and efficacy, confirming it by His Spirit in the conversion of sinners and edification of saints. An intimate friend of ours lately had a lady visiting her, who had spent some time in Mr. E.'s society, and was an ardent disciple of his, and, what is of more importance, a true and happy follower of Christ, rejoicing in the knowledge of His salvation through the reception of the views of the Gospel before alluded to. May many thus be added to the Lord!

"You ask my opinion of Mr. Irving; and of his views of unfulfilled prophecy; and also the general opinion among those who may be considered competent to judge on the subject. A newspaper accompanies this, containing a short notice of three or four works in opposition to his sentiments by men very eminent on theological matters, from which you may gather what I believe is the general sentiment of pious, thinking, sober-minded persons on the subject. He is by all parties considered unsound in doctrine. His introduction to Ben Ezra seems to me a most lamentable specimen of human infirmity, and must at any rate rank him low as a Christian, whatever may be thought of him by his partisans as an expounder of prophecy.

"With Ben Ezra's own work I was much interested and edified. Though a Jesuit, there is every evidence of his being a man of true piety, and of his making piety to consist in its essentials, and in them alone, 'faith which worketh by love.' His talents and

his humility are alike conspicuous ; and, I think, I derived much light on many prophecies concerning the second coming of Messiah from it. I was even confirmed in my general agreement with him, by some particular passages wherein we disagreed through his affiliation to the church of Rome. Even as to Anti-Christ, I fully agreed with him in the general view, though I also believe the man of sin to be the individual developement of Anti-Christ in the papacy, as generally expounded by Protestants. I have long thought that the application of it was too exclusive among us. Even in St. John's time, Anti-Christ was in the world,—a moral opposition to Christ ; but certainly not the papal heresy ; —the spirit and love of the world, which in due time brought forth Popery. But I must not enlarge. I think the sober study of prophecy, like the study of every part of the Word of God, profitable ; and the increased direction of men's minds to it in these latter days, seems to me an important sign of the times.

“ There are those, however, who, I fear, are putting that study in the place of the essentials of religion ;—who, in their eagerness to know the times and the seasons when ‘ the kingdom shall be given to the saints of the Most High,’ seem to forget that ‘ the kingdom of God is within.’ All that can be said on the second coming of Christ, as to our individual use, is included in our Lord's command to ‘ watch.’ In an hour that we think not, He will probably come to each of us ; and most certainly to many of us long before His personal reign on earth. May we be found among those blessed servants who are waiting for His appearing in the way of His appointment ! If so, all will be well, should we be

alive, and unexpectedly caught up to meet our Lord in the air. And without that preparation of grace in the heart, though we may 'understand all mysteries' of unfulfilled prophecy, we shall not share in His triumph, though we shall undoubtedly witness it."

She afterwards writes,—

"My views on the personal reign, the human nature of Christ, and the work of the Spirit, have undergone no change; though I have, to the best of my ability, investigated the subjects, and read the best writers in favour of the new or revived opinions on these subjects. I pray God to give me a right judgment in all things; and to preserve me from that error into which many good people have fallen, of expecting infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit on matters in which God has never promised it. He has given us His written word to be interpreted by reason and common sense, in a spirit of humble readiness to receive the truth."

The following letter refers also to the same subject:—

TO MRS. T. W.

"March 20th, 1831.

"MY BELOVED FRIEND,

"I HAVE been longing much to see you, that we might have some conversation on the signs of the times, and the prospects of the church, as we could discern them from the sacred hill of prophecy. There never was a period, I believe, when parties ran

so high on the subject of the Millennium. Having, during the last three years, been in the way of much discussion of the personal reign of Christ, and the subject being new to me, I was ready to be staggered by the apparent strength of the arguments for it drawn from the literal interpretation of Scripture. I judged it important, and have given to the investigation of the subject much time and pains, and I am thankful for the light which I have obtained upon prophetic Scripture in the search. Had I stopped half-way, I should have received the views now so prevalent in the evangelical circles; but, truth only being my object, I read impartially on both sides until I have come to a settled mind as to the general correctness of what may be called, 'the old views,'—the spiritual reign of the Messiah. Yet I feel myself much indebted to those of the contrary mind for light indirectly thrown upon the subject, and I trust the discussion will tend to the general improvement and advancement of the church in the study of prophecy. To Faber I have been greatly indebted. I think, my dear friend, that he is peculiarly fitted for the investigation of prophecy; and though not so spiritually illuminated as some who have undertaken to write on the subject, yet I have met with few whose notions are not crude and hasty compared with his. I believe him to be a sincere lover of truth; a man of remarkable candour and integrity; and a pious man too; but I believe that circumstances and associations call for large allowances in our judgment of the conduct of men who have been all their lives surrounded with an atmosphere such as his.

"I have also lately read a most able work, 'The Natural History of Enthusiasm.' I think it calcu-

lated for much usefulness in the church of God in the present day. It is most elegantly written, and in a beautiful spirit of enlarged Catholicity. There is, my beloved C——, as you know, a danger of enthusiasm truly so called, among persons of much excellence ; and their errors produce effects ‘ as when a standard-bearer fainteth.’ I sometimes fear that Mr. D. is falling into some degree of it. It is a sort of mysticism resembling the contemplative abstractions of the Asiatics, under Christian names and guises.

“ Your very attached Friend,

“ JANE GIBSON.”

The proposal to remodel the Bible Society, by which the Christian church was so greatly agitated, engaged her ardently. She did not fear the result : “ It seems to me, a device of Satan, to divide, in order to devour. But there is too much real piety, and scriptural knowledge, and sound reason in the church, I mean the church universal, to allow of any considerable impression being made by these novelties.”

I one day received a small pamphlet from Mrs. Gibson, containing strictures upon the ministry of one of those in the north who were just emerging into clearer light, but who thought that they only enjoyed the light which had long shone clearly upon thousands of the Israel of God, while they had been shunning its beams under the influence of systems and prejudices. It was accompanied, as indeed was every packet I received from so ready a scribe, with one of her short, characteristic notes, which always contained some valuable remark, something calculated to excite reflection, or to stimulate exertion.

“ I SEND you a pamphlet, curious in its way ; and if you can find time, I should like you to read it. I hope Mr. — is clearer-headed than ‘ a hearer ’ makes him to be ; but I feel much interested in the warmth of heart displayed by that party, who, though very babes in many respects, are yet, I trust, destined to revive the work of God in that place where long and profound argumentations on doctrines, have been once more fully proved to be inefficacious to work the work of God. Now, as usual, by weak things, and things that are despised, He is working, that the glory may be His own.

“ The way in which this pamphlet found itself in Newcastle, is rather amusing, and characteristic of the infant simplicity of new converts. It has led me to some profitable meditation on the gradual, yet almost uniform changes wrought by time, in the sentiments of individuals and churches : how they generally become less zealous, as they grow more correct. Reason gradually encroaches on the province of faith.”

Mrs. Gibson having been acquainted with a case of some perplexity, which occurred during my stay at Newcastle, in her first communication after learning my decision, made some remarks which illustrate her practical regard to that divine direction, “ In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” It expresses her habitual sentiments upon an important article of Christian duty.

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ I AM truly glad and thankful to learn that you are still at home.....The marks of Divine leading, I have been, in some respects, peculiarly called

to observe for the last ten years. As I was the first member of the family who was brought to the knowledge of the truth, I was called to a course of conduct diametrically opposed to the judgment and wishes of those who would in ordinary circumstances have been to me the organs of Providence. Nothing short of the clearest direction could have warranted my opposing the will of those to whom I was under the highest obligations. I have had many a deep and painful consideration of that passage, 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.' But it was a discipline well suited to subdue my natural impatience, and to check my impetuosity. I trust the end has been in some good measure attained. I can hardly think of some of the means; but they were in the highest sense 'mercy and truth.' I was seven years in that school, learning not to choose any thing. And by the grace of God, I think I can say, that I have habitually no choice after I feel the gentlest intimations of the way and will of God. My deep conviction of the impossibility of being happy in any thing but according to His will, makes me always tremblingly anxious to know it; and my natural impatience sometimes shows itself in tempting me to seek 'a sign;' but I never felt myself justified in so doing: and although I have obtained signs which were in accordance with what turned out to be right, yet I could not act on these alone. They had not to me the stamp of Divine approbation, and were not accompanied with Divine evidence. 'I will guide thee with Mine eye.' This has lately been particularly opened to me. It marks, I think, the kind of guidance which they who know the Lord ought to expect;—a gentle, almost insensible guidance, only given to those servants

whose 'eye is to the hand of their Master ;' and also implying an habitual acquaintance with His mind and will, and a disposition to obey. As soon as we obey this gentle intimation of the eye, then I think we shall feel the smile of approbation—approbation of our watchfulness, our spiritual understanding, our obedience. The rest we will talk over when we meet. It is a fruitful subject.

“ Yours very affectionately,
“ JANE GIBSON.”

The following letter, written to her sister some time afterwards, will illustrate the same subject. Miss Gibson had endeavoured to dissuade her from a journey, in which she was to meet Mr. Gibson.

“ THOUGH I set out here under painful feelings, yet satisfied in my own mind that I was in the path of duty, I was enabled to commit myself, and all dear to me, with confidence to God ; and I know that you will rejoice to find that I am now certain that I was rightly directed. I am satisfied that — and you feel the deepest and most affectionate interest in our welfare ; and that from the best of motives you opposed my coming here. But still I could not, in the absence of reasons, be swayed by your judgment : and as I have erred from leaning to the understanding of others, when I ought to have acted by my own light, I felt obliged in this instance to be guided by that view of the matter which I had myself. I knew that I had no will in coming here ; that I would rather have staid at home, but was only desirous of being in the path of duty. I thank God, I feel myself happy in His guidance ; and that I desire more than any thing to do, yea, even to suffer the will of God.

In one of her communications, after playfully noticing the children, she says, "Mamma, as you will perceive, is growing fonder (query, sillier) on all such matters than she ever expected to be. However, the sight of Lowth [Lectures on Hebrew Poetry] can still awaken old propensities; and especially as it is not very convenient to send it by this opportunity, I will keep it until I can go through it again, which will not be long. It affords me additional pleasure in the reading, to imagine with what zest you will turn over its pages. It is an admirable work. Equal abilities may be found elsewhere; but writings so exquisitely elaborate, I believe, issue exclusively from the English Universities. The unaffected modesty of such men, expressed as his is in the introductory Lecture, it is refreshing to turn to, from the inflation and conceit of half-taught pigmies who respect nobody but themselves." She, however, some time afterwards, observes, "From what I have read just now of Lowth, I think I might perhaps find more to except now, than I did in the period when I read it before. Such eminent scholars are in danger of over-rating the Greek and Latin classics, and of not giving due prominence to the plenary inspiration of Holy Writ."

On the 28th of October, 1829, Mrs. Gibson was called to pass through a very severe trial in the loss of a dear infant about ten months old; and this affliction was rendered the more painful, by the flattering hopes which were raised by its recent recovery from sickness. Mr. Gibson ventured to leave home ten days before, and only arrived in time to see its remains before interment. The record in her journal will exhibit the spirit of submission in which Mrs. Gibson bowed to this dispensation.

“MY dear husband was suddenly called to London on the 18th instant: left us all in perfect health, and when he returns, will find the dear babe a corpse. O my God, I thank Thee that I feel an entire resignation to Thy will in this painful event, and all the circumstances connected with it. Thou hast mingled much mercy in the dispensation. If the bereavement was sudden and unexpected, that is mitigated by the consideration that the dear babe’s sufferings were short, and his dismission to Thy blessed presence easier than is the common lot. O Lord Jesus, I thank Thee for that eternal life which Thou hast gained for him, and for all who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression. Grant that this providence may be sanctified to us all, and that we may live more for eternity than we have done.”

In the autumn of 1829, Mrs. Gibson and a few intelligent and pious mothers, improved a hint given in the admirable “Memoirs of Mrs. Huntington,” by forming a “Maternal Association,” the simple object of which was,—by conversation, reading, and prayer, to assist each other in the important work of domestic education. The members of this little Association met with many discouragements; but there were who felt their paramount responsibility as mothers, and had a corresponding anxiety to learn the best method of discharging their most onerous duties; and they persevered. Their rules embodied some highly-important principles, and this engagement having led Mrs. Gibson to read a good deal on the subject of training up children, she acknowledged ever afterwards the great advantage she had personally derived from this comparatively unsuccessful attempt at mutual instruction and benefit. To the beautiful

little volume of Mr. C. Anderson on the "Domestic Constitution," she felt herself especially indebted ; and there is no doubt that her children and many others will reap the direct and indirect benefit of that course of reading, thought, and observation which she was thus led to pursue.

TO MRS. T. W.

"Newcastle, April 13th, 1830.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"I AM at present, (with especial reference to the 'Maternal Association,') reading a most excellent work on 'The Domestic Constitution,' by Mr. Anderson, of Edinburgh. I should very much like you, and your numerous heads of families, to see it. I never before met with any writer who so deeply and ably discusses the subject as he does.

"I send you herewith the 'Memoir of Isabella Campbell,' which I think you will read with interest and profit. By accounts which I receive from the west of Scotland, I believe that a deeper and more extensive work of grace is going on in Scotland, than has been for a long period. Mr. Erskine's views of the love of God, though to my apprehension mixed with much that is but wood, hay, stubble, yet are founded on blessed truths, and in him are connected with eminent piety ; and God is owning the truth, and honouring His servants in endeavouring to disseminate it. I believe that Calvinism will get a blow by his opinions, which neither he, nor those who first adopt them, are aware of. The deeply-versed Calvinists see the danger ; and the more pious of them are led to examine the truths which are producing such an effect, and bestir themselves in very

dread of the overthrow of those peculiarities which they deem essential to the truth. Thus the Lord is over-ruling the shortsightedness and ignorance of man, to the spread of pure and transforming religion : and therein we rejoice, whether it be accompanied with some of Mr. Erskine's philosophy, or tinged with the, to us, odious peculiarities of Calvin.

* * * * *

“ We had the high gratification of hearing Mr. Armstrong preach twice on Sunday. He certainly is a son of thunder. His style of preaching differs little from his manner of speaking, consisting chiefly of argument, interspersed with most pointed, powerful, and faithful application. It most resembles what we hear of Bishops Ridley and Latimer. I can compare it with no pulpit address that ever came under my personal notice. In the evening his subject was chiefly found in the first and last woe denounced (in Matt. xxiii.) by our Lord against the scribes and pharisees, ‘ the false teachers’ of the Jewish church, who, he said, ‘ were types of the false teachers in the Christian church.’ O what a description he gave of the way in which such ‘ took away the key of the kingdom,’ the word of God ;—in whole, when they could, as the Papists ; in part, by concealing it, and substituting smooth things instead, as in Protestant churches : and especially he addressed himself to Ministers of the Establishment.”

Mrs. Gibson, like her mother, was remarkable for observing days, not with any superstitious feelings, but making anniversaries seasons of profitable reflection. Scarcely a week could pass, but one or more

of its dates reminded them of some event, of interest to themselves at least.

Mrs. Gibson writes,

“ Sunday, April 25th.—THE fifth anniversary of my dear mother's death. Daily have I cause to thank God for the wisdom wherewith she guided her household ; and daily do I find her example a source of instruction and reproof to myself as a mother and a mistress. My attention has been much directed toward the consideration and attainment of that wisdom whereby I may rightly fill up the place assigned me in my family, and answer all the vast and important designs of God in the domestic constitution ; that, like Abraham, I may command my children and my household after me, that they may keep the ways of the Lord when I am gathered unto my fathers. Lord, enable me to walk within my house with a perfect heart. And pardon all my past sins, errors, and infirmities ; and counteract, by Thy grace, the pernicious tendency of them, for the sake of our Divine Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ the Righteous.”

CHAPTER IX.

Mrs. Gibson is appointed Class-Leader—Letters to Members of her Class—Christian Cheerfulness—Reading—Spiritual Exercises—Satan's Devices—Entering into Covenant—"Spiritual Judaising"—Croy's George IV.—Her Sympathy—Sabbaths and Ordinances—Hypocrisy—Worldly Gain—The Asiatic Cholera in Newcastle—Sudden Death of her Infant.—Mr M'Nicol's Labours—Millennium—Reformation Society—Advice to one newly married—Troubles of the Church.

IN the month of August, 1830, Mrs. Gibson was appointed to the charge of a class; the same of which she had the joint charge with Miss Stamp before she was married. It is well that the church is left to judge of the qualifications of different persons for stations of usefulness; or the bold and least-qualified would push out and supersede those who, with higher fitness, have the humility which makes them esteem others better than themselves. Her feelings are best described in her own language:—

"August 19th.—This day Mr. N. has informed me that I have been nominated a Class-Leader. Lord, I beseech Thee direct me in my deliberations, and enable me to decide according to Thy will. Thou knowest that every increase of acquaintance with myself increases my sense of my own weakness and unworthiness, and that I shrink from public offices more than ever. Yet I am willing to serve Thy church in my generation, if such be the order of Thy providence. Fit me for every service Thou

allest me to, then shall Thy strength be made perfect in my weakness ! ”

The onerous duties of a Methodist Class-Leader were not lightly entered upon by Mrs. Gibson. She now better knew the difficulty of the work ; and was well aware that faithful and judicious Class-Leaders are the very sinews of Methodism. In accepting this office at the call of the church, she did, however, very properly stipulate that she should not be restricted to keep it a Class for young people, since it would be manifestly for their advantage to hear experience more spiritual and mature than their own.

As a Leader, she faithfully watched over her members as one that must give an account, feeding them with wisdom and knowledge. She spake the truth in love, not as pleasing men, but God, that trieth our hearts. With many other faithful Leaders in the same society, Mrs. Gibson might adopt the language of the apostle :—“ We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children : so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe : as ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, that ye should walk worthy of God, who hath called you into His kingdom and glory.” She was greatly beloved by her class ; for she was prudent, confidential, fervent ; and by her example,

“ Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.”

The following letters addressed to members of her

class at different periods, are here inserted without reference to chronology, with the design of exhibiting Mrs. Gibson's character as a Class-Leader ; the first letter excepted, which was written six years before this period, but is preserved as an illustration of her tender and prudent zeal.

TO MRS. VASEY.

"MY DEAR MRS. V.

"I AM glad of such an occasion and opportunity of addressing you as the present ; and I know that when I explain it, it will be as pleasing to you as to me, because it relates chiefly to the service of our Lord and Master.

"I know not whether you are much acquainted with —, the bearer of this, but I believe that you are aware that she was once a member of the Methodist society. Since my return home, she has opened her mind to me on the subject of religion in a way that excited no common feelings of interest and compassion. She feels her state to be one of danger, of restlessness, and of sorrow. She feels that she has been depriving her soul of all the benefits which she enjoyed among us, and that she has gradually lost her peace and power, her love and confidence. And now, my dear Mrs. Vasey, she remembers her Father's house, where there is bread enough and to spare, and she wishes to return and find rest. Blessed be God, we have an Advocate with the Father, who is also the propitiation for our sins. I have recommended her to your class, which, I hope, meets at a time that will prove convenient to her ; and I trust the Lord will again add her to the true Church, and make you an instrument of great good to her soul. Her circumstances will require

great prudence and decision ; and I feel anxious to secure to her the advantages of your counsel and assistance. O that the Lord may enable her to withstand and overcome ! I have endeavoured to be faithful to her, and I think have told her the truth plainly. I would just add, that she seems to me peculiarly prone to depend upon and seek to creatures instead of to the Lord. I fear, too, that she rather unduly relies upon means of grace. She does, however, seem deeply impressed with the necessity of becoming a true Christian ; and I hope she will be again united to the Living Head of the Church.

“ Yours, in the best of bonds,

“ JANE GIBSON.”

TO MISS S——.

“ MY DEAR M——.

“ YOUR very affectionate letter was just, as to its subject, what I wished it to be ; and I felt particularly pleased with the openness of your statements as to yourself and your pursuits. I rejoice to see that you are beginning to awake to a view of the advantages of your present situation, and manifest a desire to improve them. This is right. It is what the Lord requires, and He will bless the endeavour, and crown it with success. When you bring to the examination of your lot, a heart disposed to view aright the mercies with which you are surrounded, the Lord will open your eyes, and show you such wonders of grace and goodness in all his dealings with you, as will overwhelm you with humble gratitude and love. ‘ He will put a new song into your mouth, even thanksgiving to our God.’ ‘ It is a good and pleasant thing to be thankful ;’ and ‘ praise is

comely.' This, my dear M——, is what you especially need; a resolute endeavour to look at the bright side of every thing. Some have more of a natural tendency to do this than others; but it is only the eye of faith that can at all times pierce the clouds which seem sometimes so to surround our horizon, that nature would not be able to discover any bright side at all. The mercies as well as the judgments of God are often 'far above, out of the sight' of nature; but faith is the evidence of things not seen. Endeavour, my dear M——, to use the grace you have; to be thankful for it; and to pray and seek earnestly for that 'full salvation' which is set before us in the Gospel.

"Constant employment will, of itself, tend to promote cheerfulness, and that again will be beneficial to your health, and give energy to your character. Thus usefully occupied, you may not so properly be said 'to live in time,' as that 'time will live in you.' Occupation gives to moments their individuality; it stamps them with a character; a character, too, lasting as eternity.

"Never be discouraged with apparent difficulties. Let 'I will try,' be your motto. It has wrought wonders. 'Prayer and pains, through faith in Christ, can do anything.' I think you will do well to go through Paley's works; they form part of our standard literature. Robertson's Histories you should read the whole of. I have never seen Derham's Astro-Theology, but judging from his Physico-Theology, I should think it likely to be suitable for you. These, with the periodicals and lighter works of the day, will furnish you employment for some time. I shall be glad if you will freely give me your opinions upon what you read.

This may lead us both to think, and prove a mutual advantage. I wish to be always learning, and I find no way of doing so, but that of exercising my judgment in the application of the little I do know, and endeavouring daily to add something to it.

"I hope you take a good deal of exercise in the open air. This, whilst it refreshes the body, invigorates the mind.

"I well know what your feelings would be in visiting —; but if she is disposed to see you, and will allow you to preserve your own character as a Christian whilst you are with her, I hope you will continue to visit her. May the blessing of the Lord accompany you! My letters are generally written in haste, and need always the excuses of friendship, which I believe I may rely upon from you.

"I am, my dear M——,

"Yours affectionately,

"JANE GIBSON."

TO THE SAME.

"MY DEAR M——,

....."THE present year has been to me, from its very commencement, one of much painful exercise of mind. I have frequently been called to pass through providential darkness, and to exercise a bare and naked faith in the promises of God. This is hard work; but, by the grace of God, I have been enabled to commit my way unto Him, to sacrifice my own will, and to yield myself up to the Lord, in firm assurance that He will continue to be my sun and shield, that He will give grace and glory, and will withhold no good thing from me, if I walk uprightly. And now, my dear M——, the sum of all seems to be this, that we need have no other care

than to 'walk uprightly.' All else is the Lord's; and we dishonour him when we attempt to burden ourselves with that which he assures us shall be His charge. This, then, is the life of faith. It is uncongenial to nature; but to those who keep 'looking unto Jesus,' it shall be made an attainment. 'In me ye shall have peace,' said the Saviour. Why is our peace so often disturbed? Because we fail of the grace of God; because unbelief creeps in, and roots of bitterness spring up to trouble and defile us. My dear M——, I write feelingly on this subject. I daily have cause to lament my short-comings in this and every grace. I am, indeed, an unprofitable servant; but my gracious Lord and Master chastens me, and teaches me out of His law. May He never leave me to myself.

....."I wish that you would call on her, and see what impression this long and deep affliction has made on her mind. I have a hope that the Lord may lead her, by these subduing dispensations, to himself. I feel assured that there is nothing around her calculated to satisfy a mind like hers. O, that it may be led to seek rest in its proper centre! I have some thoughts of writing to her, but I should rather like to hear some account of her from you first.

"Believe me,

"Your attached Friend,

"JANE GIBSON."

TO MISS M.

"MY DEAR MISS M.

"I READ your note of last night with deep interest. I am not surprised to hear of your mind being thus exercised. The arch-enemy of souls, perceiving you are fast escaping out of his toils, will

must fail to harass, though he cannot destroy. He is
 still the accuser of the brethren, and an old serpent,
 killed in all crafty devices to weaken the feeble
 believer. Whatever thoughts of yourself you have,
 however they may come with a show of humiliation,
 which tend to mere self-condemnation, without
 leading to increased faith in Christ, as the Saviour
 from all sin, parley not with them. 'Resist the
 devil;' enter into no reasonings on his suggestions.
 Lift up your heart unto God, and endeavour more
 vigorously to act faith upon his word; especially
 upon the declarations of God concerning the efficacy
 of the atoning blood of Christ. Remember that it
 is when 'against hope we believe in hope, not stag-
 gering at the promise of God through unbelief,' that
 we are 'strong in faith, giving glory to God.' The
 'hope of salvation' is the most important piece of that
 'whole armour of God,' which we are commanded to
 take, in order that we may be able to withstand
 Satan in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
 Now, my dear friend, you have begun to taste the
 joys of salvation, but then you must not forget that
 you are also just entering upon the conflict of faith.
 I well know, that when we first realize the power of
 saving faith, we are ready to think that we shall not
 see evil any more. We are mercifully ignorant of
 the power and malice of our spiritual enemies, and
 also of our own proneness to be deceived by them.
 We are indeed ignorant, both of our own weakness,
 and of the power of divine grace to sustain and to
 endue us with vigour for the 'fight of faith.' Both
 we must learn; and God displays His wisdom,
 power, and love, in overruling the very machinations
 of Satan for the trying and the perfecting of His
 saints. Be not, then discouraged, my dear friend;

nor think some strange thing has happened to you. If I were never to write or speak on spiritual subjects but when I were free from such suggestions as you suffer from, I might almost invariably hold my peace. When giving an opinion on any matter of practice, according to the word of God, it is commonly suggested to me, 'Now you are condemning yourself;' or, 'Perhaps at some future time you may do the direct contrary.' I find no answer so good as, 'It is true and right, whether it be my practice or not;' and often God has strengthened me in a season of temptation by the very words wherewith I have counselled others; and which came with double weight to my mind, as being, on every account, binding on myself. Whatever sin, defect, or infirmity, you see, or feel, or apprehend in yourself, my dear friend, bring all at once to the foot of the cross. Not only bring, but leave it there. Make the sure word of God the standard and warrant of your faith, and not your own fluctuating feelings. Consider that your nervous, weak state of body will peculiarly expose you to temptations founded on variations of that kind. Get your mind deeply impressed with a sense of the unchangeableness and love of God toward you.

"There is no just cause to fear your saying or writing too much on your own spiritual feelings: nature runs in another channel. You have rather cause to pray, 'Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.' Of how many vows was this the subject with David! Yet David had his seasons of such conflict and almost despair, that he was ready to ask, 'Is the Lord clean gone for ever?' Many reasons his grievous falls might have seemed to urge for his no more publicly profess-

ing to serve God. Yet the royal psalmist was not so taught of God; and his mental exercises are recorded under the sanction of the Holy Ghost. After all, it is not the purity, but the self-righteousness within us, which is offended at the professions of grace made by those whose former sinfulness has been known to us, whether in their unconverted or backsliding state; and the same cause, as refers to ourselves, hinders our receiving the testimony of God concerning His willingness to accept us now, and as we are, to be wholly saved and renewed by Christ. This is the faith at which we stagger. Lord, we believe; help Thou our unbelief!

“May He graciously bless what His poor, feeble servant has written, under a deep sense of her own incompetency.

“Yours, my dear Friend,

“Very affectionately,

“JANE GIBSON.”

TO THE SAME.

“MY DEAR MISS M.

“Your kind and welcome note of Saturday was most refreshing to my spirit; and I involuntarily exclaimed, as I finished reading it, ‘What hath God wrought?’ He has indeed opened your eyes, and given you to see wondrous things in His law. He is giving you blessed foretastes of His love. Cherish them, and do not, on any account, cast away the confidence which, at such seasons, you feel; for it hath great recompence of reward. Remember, that it is by faith that we honour God; and the more we honour Him by believing the record He hath given concerning his Son, the more clearly He will testify within us by His Spirit of our personal interest

in all the blessings purchased for us by His precious death. Pray for more simple faith. In proportion as you obtain, this will be your victory over all your enemies. By faith every imagination, and every high thought, may be brought into captivity to Christ. But, my dear friend, you will have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.

“To ‘hate vain thoughts,’ is a gracious attainment, and one which should excite much gratitude. God despises not the day of small things; let us not do so. Let us praise Him for every degree of spiritual discernment as well as conquest.

“I do indeed, my dear friend, quite approve of your entering into covenant with God. You have already done so, virtually, again and again; and I see no reason why you should not do so formally, if you feel your own mind drawn to such an engagement. In so doing, my dear friend, leave all considerations as to what may be your future circumstances and temptations. God hath said, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’ And again; ‘There shall no temptation happen to you, but what is common to men; and out of every temptation I will make a way for your escape, that ye may be able to bear it.’ It is the will of God that you should abide in Christ; and He will suit His gracious aid to your circumstances and necessities, be they what they may, in a manner that you cannot know until you receive it. Trust Him for His grace. Leave self. He hath undertaken for thee. Answer Satan, and your own heart, with such words as, ‘My grace is sufficient for thee.’ ‘As thy days, so shall thy strength be.’ ‘Not I, but the grace of God that is with me.’ ”

TO THE SAME.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I REJOICE to find both from your conversation and your notes, that you continue in earnest about the progress of the work of grace. This is well. It excites my gratitude; it should doubly excite yours. The more you praise God for what He has done for you, the more will your love to Him expand, and the more will your faith in Him be increased for the continuance and perfecting of that work. You are quickened by the Spirit of His grace. You desire more sensibly to apprehend the testimony. But beware of what Mr. Fletcher calls ‘Spiritual Judaizing.’ Remember that the Spirit is sovereign in His operations.

‘Let Him as He listeth blow.’

You ‘know that you have passed from death unto life:’ be not anxious for any mode of Divine manifestation or attestation of that glorious truth. I think you will be in danger of grieving the Holy Spirit, if you indulge in anxious desires, even on this subject. The resignation of the will to God, is as necessary in spirituals as in temporals. Bear this in mind, my dear friend. Seek the sanctifying grace of the Spirit. Seek it as an instantaneous, seek it as a gradual, and continual, and never-ending work of the Spirit. Be thankful for every, the least degree of it; yet be calmly, believingly expecting the largest measures of holiness. In such a state you will always be safe, and always progressively happy. I do not mean in raptures; the health of the soul consists not in these. Like the health of the body, it is consciously and delightfully enjoyed by those who possess it; but it is a calm enjoyment, not a state of

feverish excitement which wears itself out. In this world, religion is not merely to be sought for its own sake, and for our enjoyment; but to fit us for the whole range of the duties of life. Were it possible for us to be always in ecstasies, it would be unsuitable to our present condition, and would unfit us for many of the positive duties of life,—to say nothing of the danger of our being ‘exalted above measure,’ thereby falling into pride, the condemnation of the devil. See 2 Cor. xii.

“I think it probable from what I know of your natural disposition, that the Lord may see fit to lead you in a very silent, gradual way. Leave that with Him: pray for patience with yourself. What Mr. W—— said about the habit of believing, scarcely admits of further explanation. You have by many acts of faith received the word of life, casting your soul upon the merits of the death of Christ for justification: now continue relying upon Him, not withdrawing your confidence, but resting in it, and exercising through faith the life and strength imparted to you through your union with Christ: not questioning every moment whether you have faith, or whether you are in Christ; but exercising that faith in the performance of every duty as it is presented to you; above all, exercising it upon the written word, and according to the written word; receiving every part of it at once as a Divine testimony.

“Then again, as to your conduct towards others. You want wisdom. Look to God: He promises to give it. Perhaps that which sometimes restrains you from speaking, and through a want of simple faith you are condemning yourself for not having spoken, may have been a dictate of the Divine Spirit. But our hearts are deceitful. We know this; and,

through weakness, Satan gets an advantage over us. A single eye is what we need most. Indeed, if we have this, we have all. God engages for the rest. But, my dear C——, it is through a discipline of circumstances, and often of errors of many kinds, that we are instructed. We are feeble flesh and blood. We are of the earth, earthy. We commence Christianity as babes. True, we have all our spiritual senses, so to speak, as a babe has, when born, every external sense and member that it will ever have; but they are not exercised, and they must grow and be strengthened gradually before the works of maturity can be accomplished by it. I am thankful to see my beloved babe possessing these in infant perfection. If it were to lose its appetite, I should feel alarmed. You will apply this.....

“Yours, most affectionately,

“JANE GIBSON.”

TO THE SAME.

“MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

“IT seems that neither you, nor your dear mamma, are in even your usual health. ‘I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction,’ seems the Divine address to you both. But then it is also, ‘We count them happy which endure;’ ‘when ye are tried, ye shall receive the crown of life.’ A crown of life! The apostle had to coin phrases to express what never had been put in mortal language,—what it was impossible to utter. Life,—not a dying, painful life, such as we now live; but a life worthy of the name! O, my dear friend, let us resolve that no man shall take our crown.

“I have this week read Croly’s ‘Life and Times

of George IV ;' an elegant work, and peculiarly interesting to us, who, having lived in his day, can fill up from memory much that is barely hinted at, or passed over in silence. Such books generally cast a shade over my mind. They are profitable; but O, they are such a practical comment on the vanity of all earthly things, as almost makes one melancholy.—'This is death!'—the last words of the expiring monarch :—'This is reality—all else has been shadow'—they seem to say in in my ears—and then he was in eternity !.....Pray for me.

" Yours very affectionately,

" JANE GIBSON."

TO MRS. B.

" MY DEAR AFFLICTED FRIEND,

" WORDS cannot express the feelings of my heart, on reading your precious testimony to the faithfulness of our covenant-keeping God. With one of old, you may sing of mercy and of judgment; and I trust the result of all your painful experience will be also like his, 'I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.' My soul has deeply sympathized with you in your accumulated trials. I have wept with you; yea, and rejoiced over you, now that I know you have not fainted under the chastening of the Lord. O, my dear friend, be not discouraged; but whenever you feel ready to sink, again renew your acts of faith in our Great High Priest. He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and He is ever ready to succour the tempted, and to administer strong consolation to those who are under peculiar trials.

' His love is as great as His power,

And neither knows measure nor end.'

You know that it is through much tribulation that we must enter the kingdom. 'Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth.' O, my dear friend, when we behold all these things in the light of eternity, we shall fully accord with him who said, 'We count them happy which endure.' All your former sorrow, heavy as it was, will now be swallowed up in concern about your dear husband and sister. I do trust that they will speedily be restored. Much prayer has been offered up, for them and for you. On Friday morning, at the early prayer-meeting, our good friend Mr. — mentioned the painful circumstances; and much fervent intercession was made for you all, with tears, and an evident sympathy beyond what words could express. But He who reads the heart beheld His servants' desires for you all; and I doubt not has answered, and will answer, their prayers. May the Lord strengthen your faith! He hath said, 'As thy days thy strength shall be.'

"Your very affectionate Friend,
"JANE GIBSON."

Two or three specimens of Mrs. Gibson's faithfulness in writing to those who had not avowed themselves as followers of Christ, may neither be unacceptable, nor useless.

"YOUR Sundays, I fear, would not be Sabbaths there; and I well know how insensibly our regard and reverence for that holy day is affected by the practices and opinions of those with whom we associate. The depravity of our nature disposes us to a ready assimilation with that which is evil; while the same cause renders that which is good of slow and difficult attainment; indeed, impossible to be attained

or retained but by the continual agency of the Holy Spirit, working in us that which is good, and restraining and reproofing that which is evil. But the Spirit of God is a free-agent, and jealous of His own honour; and though His first operations in every fallen spirit of man are unsought and undesired, yet if these gracious drawings are slighted and unimproved, He withdraws Himself from the soul, and thus leaves it to its native darkness, sensuality, and insensibility; or, as the Scripture emphatically describes it, 'dead in trespasses and sins.'

"Your present situation will also, I know, render your stated attendance at any place of worship likely to be profitable,—difficult, if not impossible. This is of the first importance, and will therefore, I trust, be duly weighed by you. You need not now be informed that a mere attendance on public worship, though that may lull a conscience, will by no means satisfy a soul seeking salvation. Knowing, my dear —, how apt we are to leave out such considerations, or to assign them an inferior place in our worldly arrangements, I bring them before you. May the Lord guide you aright in all things! My chief concern is for your soul's welfare. If that be secure, all is safe. Let us bear this in mind in all our worldly calculations. Let us never forget that 'one thing is needful.' Some other things are desirable and agreeable; but one, salvation, is absolutely needful."

"To know whether we really have religion or not, is a matter of the last importance. Even in this day of religious profession, I believe there are many more who are themselves deceived, than are attempting merely to deceive others. 'The world thinks hypo-

crisy much more common than it is. Indeed, to be a successful hypocrite, would be ten times more difficult than to be a real Christian. When I say, 'a successful hypocrite,' of course my meaning is limited to this world. Real Christians are often supposed by worldly men, to give implicit credence to every one who makes a verbal profession of piety; but in this, as in all their judgments concerning religion, they greatly err. Such professions are often, in the very terms and circumstances of them, conclusive evidence to the contrary of what is meant to be asserted by them. But Christian charity prevents its followers from hastily judging; or from expressing their judgment, when, on almost incontestable evidence, they have been compelled to judge unfavourably."

"WHEN we see losses and gains in the light of eternity, they will often have changed their places. Perhaps many will wish their profits had been loss. The accounts will often stand thus:—'I gained so much—and lost my soul—consequently lost heaven—lost happiness for ever!' Or a believer in reviewing his matters may perhaps say, 'Ah, at such a time I lost so much—but that loss humbled me—brought me to God—or kept me in the narrow way. If I had gone on in prosperity, I see that I should have forgotten God. I should have gone on in a smooth path, but it would have led me to hell. I now see that my losses were my truest gains. I have gained heaven, not by merit, but by grace. Having, through the gracious discipline of God, been enabled to continue faithful unto death, I now inherit a crown of life.' Who can say what a gain that is? Crowns are highly valued, and often dearly bought for the

transient and uncertain period of human life ; but 'a kingdom for ever' is a gain beyond all calculation."

The close of the year 1831 will be ever referred to by the present generation, with the most gloomy reminiscences, as the period of one of the most awful visitations which this country ever experienced ; I refer to the Asiatic cholera. It made its first appearance at Sunderland ; but soon extended itself to Newcastle, and spread to most of the large towns of the kingdom, and even to many of our villages. A great proportion of the medical men were willing to doubt, yea, did stoutly deny, the existence of that peculiar, malignant disease ; but on witnessing some of the severer cases, were unwillingly convinced of the fact ; and that, in its severest forms, it set the faculty at defiance. It gave no time to attempt a remedy ; its first stroke was in general a deadly one, especially in cases of intemperance, or moderate drinking. During the whole period of its ravages in Newcastle and its neighbourhood, Mrs. Gibson's correspondence was to me a source of valuable information, both respecting the peculiar features of the disease, the nature and success of the various modes of treatment, and the communication of facts respecting its moral and religious results. The exertions, skill, kindness, and urbanity of the faculty in Newcastle, were beyond all praise, both as regards their patients, and the facilities they furnished to the medical gentlemen who, with the zeal of their profession, flocked thither from all parts, in order to study the peculiarities of the disease.

But there was mercy in the judgment ; and public prayer, crowded places of worship, deep seriousness, and extraordinary efforts for the salvation of

men, showed that the church and the nation heard the voice of the rod. Many churches spontaneously kept a day of fasting and prayer; and the writer will never forget the gracious and extensive revival of religion which commenced in a large Christian society on the very day and hour of united supplication. So effectual is fervent prayer, even when we are only driven to the throne of grace by the apprehension of temporal danger, or the pressure of affliction.

The following extracts of a letter refer to this subject, and exhibit Mrs. Gibson's confidence and resignation during this season of affliction:—

“SINCE August, the town has never been clear of fever until now; and now that new and fierce disease, Asiatic cholera, has appeared among us. It is progressing, much as it did at Sunderland; but the neighbouring villages are the scene of its visitation with us, not less than the town. The Lord has graciously heard prayer, and chastened us gently, compared with the correction of other nations, so far; and I trust will yet deliver us from a sweeping pestilence, though He may shake the rod of His anger over the whole land. Much is done for the poor, which is a general mercy at this season; and I pray that He may so sanctify the judgment as to make it an everlasting benefit to many. Death in its ordinary forms does not affect us as it ought; God is now going out of the common mode of dispensing that penalty, that men may take warning, and prepare to meet Him.

“I thank Him that I feel no painful apprehension; no fear that hath torment, either as to myself, or those dearer to me than my own life. ‘He that dwelleth in the secret of the Most High shall abide

under the shadow of the Almighty.' Lord, unite us in one spirit to thyself more closely."

"Gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity." The greatest saints are generally the greatest sufferers. They mistake who suppose that Mrs. Gibson had not gone through those fiery trials by which "God maketh the heart soft." Her afflictions were many and great; her sorrows more and greater. The loss of children is only less than the greatest bereavement we can be called to endure; and Mrs. Gibson was again made to drink that bitter cup. This bereavement was attended by circumstances peculiarly distressing. On the morning of the 21st of December Mrs. Gibson gave the infant to the nurse, to all appearance, well; and behold, it was, the next instant, a corpse! As she observed to me in a letter detailing the event, "the angel of death had taken my sweet babe from my pillow, and I knew it not."

But Mrs. Gibson had a heart to "understand the loving-kindness of the Lord," as well as to "consider His judgments;" and, ever disposed to see the "good" as well as the "evil" which she received from the hand of God," she found many circumstances graciously ordered in mitigation of her sufferings, and gratefully acknowledged that a "living man" ought not to "complain, a man for the punishment of his sins." "This," she observes, "was a sore trial; but He whom we had blessed when He gave, enabled us also to bless Him when He took away. This event brought death and eternity very intimately nigh to me. I pray that the sanctifying influence which I have felt attend it, may not pass away, but abide with me, and be increasingly

manifest in my life, and conversation, and experience !”

The following letter and note refer to this providence —

TO MRS. T. W.

“ Newcastle, January 7th, 1833.

“ MY BELOVED FRIEND,

“ BEING now graciously restored to the ability of writing, and knowing the affectionate interest you and dearest B—— take in my concerns, I hasten to make you acquainted with the change which has taken place since my dear sister wrote. We were then rejoicing in the birth of a son ; but before you received news of its birth, we were sorrowing for its death ! The event was at once sudden and unexpected. It was on the morning of the 21st, three days after it was born, that the nurse brought it to me about half past six. It sucked a little, and, as I thought, fell asleep. I desired her to take it from my pillow, which she did ; and whilst removing it, she noticed it to utter a slight sob. She took it nearer to the light, and found that it had expired ! Happily for me, I had fallen into a profound sleep immediately that she removed the dear babe, for I was worn out with want of rest. I slept about an hour. You can conceive, my dear friend, much better than I can describe, my feelings, on being informed by my dear husband, even in the gentlest way, that the dear babe who had so lately gone from my bosom, for aught I knew in health, then lay in its cradle—a corpse ! I must not dwell upon this subject. In your family, my dear friend, similar trials have occurred ; and you will know how to

sympathize with me. I often thought of dear Mr. G——. It was a peculiar season. Death and eternity appeared very near. I thank God, that He by His grace enabled me to acquiesce in His holy will, without a murmur; but to nature it was a severe stroke!

After alluding to the various sicknesses of the children at the same time, she observes,—

“I AM amazed when I reflect on the entire peace and comfort in which my mind was kept whilst all was at the worst. Now that I am able to go about, and see the dear children’s altered looks, I seem to feel all so acutely!

.....“I cannot express what I feel! The world is all a vain show. The promises of God; are my comfort, and my hope. The abundance of the Lord’s mercy towards me in friends, and comforts of a temporal nature, is often made a source of distressing conflict to me in different ways; but most frequently by the thought, How should I bear to have them cut off? O my dear friend, I cannot express my present feelings, and I had better close. You can pray for me; you can give thanks with me too; for I am a miracle of mercy!

“Let me hear soon and very particularly from you. Every thing concerning your dear family is highly interesting to me. My love to the people of God, and to the cause of God, certainly increases. In them only is my delight. The pity and sorrow I feel for all others is one source of my mental suffering.

“This season of the year will remind you all of that which at no season, I dare say, will you ever

forget. I have it all before me often ; and seldom can I think of that broken family-circle without tears. But ‘blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.’ May the Lord at this time afresh comfort the bereaved and sorrowing ! May the Lord give you, my beloved friend, in this new year, all the blessings of the new and everlasting covenant, and make you a greater blessing than ever in the church and in the world.”

TO MISS M. S—.

“MY BELOVED FRIEND,

“I RECEIVED your very kind note, and thank you for your affectionate sympathy in my sorrows. The Lord has dealt very graciously with me in answer to the many prayers offered on my behalf, and especially in regard of the intercession of our Great High Priest. He upheld me by His mighty power, and suffered not my strength to fail in the hour of bodily pain and peril ; and when it seemed fit to Him to resume the precious gift so lately bestowed, He enabled me to bow with entire resignation to His holy will. Only a nursing-mother, my dear friend, can know what are the deep and keen feelings of a mother toward such an infant of days ; or how tender thoughts of it, and its welfare, mingle themselves with all her thinkings and doings. Whether she eats or drinks, it is in reference to it. To have all these hopes blighted, and these sweet interests cut off in a moment, at one stroke, called for the exercise of grace. Blessed be God, His grace is sufficient. Faith recognises a Father’s love. It is well.....

“Your very affectionate Friend,

“JANE GIBSON.”

In the spring of 1833, Mrs. Gibson was induced to accompany her husband to Liverpool, where she was privileged for a short time with sitting under the ministry of the late Mr. M'Nicoll. Indeed the opportunity of doing so was one chief inducement to the visit. On her return, she observes :—

“ WE availed ourselves of Mr. M'Nicoll's most admirable ministry, and were greatly edified by it. Of him it may indeed be said that ‘his heart bubbleth up a good matter;’ for it seems just a spontaneous effusion out of the abundance there; and his ‘tongue is the pen of a ready writer.’ The richness, ease, persuasiveness, and loving spirit of his preaching, makes it to me the most delightful and influential ministry I ever was privileged with for any lengthened period. He sets the service of God forth in such a way as makes it indeed appear to be a ‘reasonable service,’ and ‘perfect freedom.’ I found his preaching had lost none of its old charm, but had indeed become more potent, more simple, more pointed and faithful—I should rather say close, it was always faithful. O, I should have liked you to have been with us, whilst we sat spell-bound under it. But I have very little time, and must not get upon that subject.”.....

On a subsequent visit in 1834, she observes :—

“ I SHOULD much have liked you to have heard him on Heb. x. 34—37. What a view he gave of that patience which is the result of faith! that faith which regards the present life as but a brief commencement of our existence; and in most forcible language he exhorted us not to be very anxious about

whether we had health, or wealth, or friends, in this short, uncertain life. The parting with them often gave as much pain as the enjoyment of them had given pleasure ; but rather to fix the eye upon the life beyond the grave, the never-ending existence ; the character of which depended entirely upon the use we made, not the gratification we had, of the present. O how profitably he dilated upon this part of his subject ! One moment in heaven would more than compensate for all the trials of the longest life, said he ; and they themselves, in the recollection, would prove sources of pleasure, as having been among the most beneficent parts of our earthly discipline ; and would also heighten our bliss by the contrast : whereas, the contrary effect would be most awfully realized in the case of those who had drained the cup of earthly joy, and went from scenes of worldly pleasure down into a miserable eternity. What a mercy to have our eyes opened on this side the grave ! Lord, increase the vividness of our perceptions of things unseen and eternal. But even in this life we are highly favoured, our enjoyments being sanctified, as well as our little trials, by a sweet sense of our heavenly Father's love toward us in both,—in what he gives, as well as in what he withholds. He doeth all things well.

“He is earnestly setting about finishing his work on the Holy Spirit, which I hope we shall soon see. The materials, I understand, are all ready, and only want arranging.”

But, alas ! all these purposes are now broken off. That eloquent tongue is still ; the right hand hath forgot its cunning ; and that fine eye is closed in darkness, that was wont to cast its mild and cheerful beam upon a friend, or to dart its intellectual fires upon the multitudes who listened to him as to one

who played skilfully on an instrument. Mr. M'Nicol ceased from his works in June, 1836. His sudden departure to his glorious reward, was a great loss to that religious community of which he had long been an eminent Minister, and a distinguished ornament. But, indeed, it is a loss to the general church ; for he was a man of no party, but of a catholic spirit, and esteemed by all the churches. The writer has peculiar reason to mourn his removal ; not only as a friend, but for the loss of his supervision of the present sheets, which he had kindly promised to do ; and also to furnish some materials, and a sketch of the character of Mrs. Gibson, whom he had long known, admired, and esteemed for her talents, virtues, and friendship.

It is not among the least of the reasons that the church has to mourn his unexpected removal, that a work of so great importance as that contemplated, on the testimonies furnished by writers of every church and age to the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit, should not by him be finished. It would have formed a full and satisfactory defence of one of the most important and vital doctrines of our common Christianity. Mrs. Gibson had ever taken a lively interest in the work ; and furnished Mr. M'Nicol with many important extracts from various works contained in Dr. Thomlinson's Theological Library, in Newcastle ; and from other sources. Indeed, such was the desire she felt that the doctrine should be universally better understood in the Christian church, that, at one time, she proposed to abridge, condense, and republish an anonymous work on "The Inward Testimony of the Spirit of Christ ;" printed in 1701. The work is written by a Calvinist, and, with all its great faults of style, has intrinsic excellence, and

shows deep acquaintance with the things of God. "It is written in the most tedious, dull, diffuse, ungrammatical way ; but the matter is excellent. The very transcribing of it would, however, be a laborious business ; 665 pages. I think, when purged of repetition and wordiness, it might perhaps be brought into two-thirds of the bulk."

The subject referred to in some past pages, is resumed in the following highly characteristic letter.

" Newcastle, June 24th, 1833.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" LIKE yourself I find my engagements crowd thicker and faster upon me ; and now that I am blessed with health and strength, I desire to occupy myself, according to the ability which God giveth, to some useful purpose. I assure you, I can sympathize with you in the difficulty you find 'in keeping on good terms with yourself.' As to the attempt 'to please every body,' it is long since you and I learned the folly of any such attempt. To please our God, were a nobler and an easier aim ; and that, through His grace, I am determined to do. He daily loadeth me with benefits ; He is the God of my salvation ; and to Him my more than all is due. Unworthy of the least of His benefits, and ever failing in the payment of my vows, I come with deep humiliation and thankfulness to the blood of sprinkling, the blood which alone cleanseth from sin. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and the love which has devised and executed the wondrous scheme of human redemption !

" O how often I should like to talk a little with you about those who have discarded their reason in matters of religion ! I mean those who have embraced

the notions as to the Millennium, &c. held by certain persons, one of whom lent me, the other day, a volume published in 1711, by James Cunninghame, who was then imprisoned in the Tolbooth, Edinburgh, for proclaiming sentiments exactly similar to those held by that party. The book was considered a 'confirmation strong' of the opinions they hold; whereas I should have thought no fuller proof of their absurdity needed to be sought. In his preface, he asserts his claim to plenary inspiration, and declares that the whole was communicated to him in the Tolbooth by the Holy Ghost. Wherever a word occurs that he is not certain was from the Spirit, it is enclosed in brackets. The—I know not what to call them—rhapsodies, were taken down as he uttered them. I can only say that they are unlike all the authenticated dictates of the Holy Spirit. Then he prophesies judgment, speedy judgment, within forty days, in one of the articles on Edinburgh; and the coming of Christ in fire, to take vengeance on His enemies; and to assume His kingly state. But one hundred and twenty-two years have gone by. Even the antediluvians only had one hundred and twenty years' warning, whose lives lasted centuries. But generation after generation has passed away; and though I trust we are advancing towards the Millennium, and I see great signs of preparation in the progress of knowledge and of sound wisdom, I see no greater hinderances to both these than those people are. James Cunninghame seems to have been a good man, a mystic, and a narrow-minded man. Many of those who take up with his notions seem to think that every truth they hold is a sort of discovery of their own; such as, that the love of God is the sum of religion. Has

Not that ever been held just as wisdom and piety have prevailed? Then he makes the very complaints they make, of the world being so much worse than ever it was before; and the church so much worse also, because it does not coerce people into religious observances; that is, into my religious peculiarities. It is astonishing how little even those who suffered persecution learned of the folly of such a method of making people wise and good. They only concluded that it was wrong to persecute them, because they were right; but saw not the absurdity of the principle altogether. Truth is mighty, and will prevail. Grant, O Lord, that it may have free course, and be speedily glorified! * * * I am much delighted with a volume of the Family Library, by Sir David Brewster, on Natural Magic. When you write, be so good as name any thing good you meet with in the way of books. I feel constantly stimulated to mental improvement by the desire to send my children forth, qualified to be useful in the world, and in the church. I sometimes think that my highest aim in life for my sons would be, that they should preach Christ crucified, either as laymen, or as Ministers. If God should call and qualify them, I think I should never withhold them from Him, if He would send them 'to the farthest verge of the green earth.' At the call of any other, my consent for them to go abroad would not be very easy to be obtained.

"I find Robert Hall's works a treasure. Have you seen Morris's Life of Hall? I have not seen Sprague [on Revivals] yet; but intend to do so soon.

"Yours, very truly,

"JANE GIBSON."

Mrs. Gibson had seen greater natural wonders in a foreign land than this could present, greater sublimity and more beauty ; but her love of her own country was only augmented by what she had beheld of the social and physical misery of those countries where Christ is not known. Disgusted with the mummeries of the paganized Christianity which, in that land, triumphs in its moral despotism, all covered with the glory of its ornaments, but dyed crimson with the blood of the saints,—she blessed God for Protestantism ; and whilst her pity was deepened in behalf of the wretched victims of idolatry and idol-worship, she felt more than ever that it was the duty of every British Protestant, especially, to be on his guard against the subtle encroachments, under the most specious pretences, of the Man of Sin ; and to contend with the weapons of truth for the dear-bought intellectual liberty and religious rights of his country. The sound principles which she took every means of inculcating at the time of the great agitation on the question of papistical equality, and the zeal she manifested within her proper sphere as a woman, I had the pleasure of witnessing ; and well remember the apprehensions she expressed, that we only saw the first of a series of events which would give an entire new aspect to the political and religious condition of this nation. She knew too well, from history and from observation, the rapacity of power, the depth of intrigue, the intentness of purpose, and the cold-blooded indifference to the nature of the means employed by popery,—ever to trust it with the liberties of mankind ;—and she saw, with patriotic and Christian grief, the wilful blindness of multitudes to the chronicle of facts in the history of our own and other countries,—that in proportion as a nation is touched

with her plague-spot, it is withered with her curse.

But she saw that there remained to the minority only the liberty and the honour of protesting; and took refuge from her apprehensions in the great truth, that the church is founded upon a Rock; and the foaming billows of human passion dash themselves against her, only to be broken into harmless spray, unless He who alone can bind the surges, permit them to make a breach for the punishment of her unfaithfulness. On this subject she thus expresses herself:—

“THERE is so much practical infidelity in the land, and so much culpable ignorance as to religion, even as a science, that I do not wonder at the indifference, or worse, with which the introduction of papists into our legislature is viewed by many. If men would read their Bibles more, they would understand the subject better. If it does pass, I fear it will at some, perhaps not distant, period, prove a scourge to our land. Perhaps it is ordained by Him who ruleth over all for that very end. He works by means; and whilst men are vainly taking counsel together against Him, He often works by them, as instruments, His own good pleasure—punishing the wicked by their own sins, and proving and purifying His own people, to do them good. But who shall stand when He appeareth? Let us have our hopes founded on a rock!”

Newcastle has for many years been distinguished for the number of its religious, literary, and humane institutions. In 1833, a Society was formed for the purpose of spreading the pure doctrines of Christi-

anity, in opposition to popery. Mrs. Gibson was appointed one of the secretaries; and she held this office, and zealously discharged its duties, up to the time of her removal by death. This Society was not for purposes of public discussion; but employed pious, intelligent men to visit the houses of the poor, and gather together the Romanists to read to them the word of God, and pray with them; and not wholly without success.

Being now released from the confining duties of a mother to her infant, she was anxious to improve the opportunity by some engagement of a benevolent or religious character, beyond what she had done during the four preceding years. She therefore engaged in the establishment of a Female Penitentiary; and shortly after, she was appointed treasurer and secretary of the Ladies' Branch Wesleyan Missionary Society; for whose welfare she laboured with zeal, and was permitted to see its growing prosperity. In the spring of 1834, a bazaar was held in Newcastle to aid the funds of the Missionary Society. She took a prominent part in it, many of the arrangements devolving upon her; but the result afforded every one the highest satisfaction; for the sum of £325 was paid, as the net proceeds, to the General Treasurers.

The following letter to one formerly a member of her class is worthy of record, and contains "sound speech which cannot be condemned."

"Newcastle, August 6th, 1834.

"MY DEAR J—,

"EVER since you left Newcastle, I have been so fully engaged that though I have often thought of you, I have never been able to find an opportunity

of telling you that my interest in your welfare has not ceased, though the bond that united us is severed. Filling, as you now do, a more responsible station in society, and in the church of God, I am more than ever concerned that you should be richly endued with that wisdom which cometh from above, to enable you rightly to fill up and adorn that station. I am glad to hear, from all the persons I have inquired of, a most favourable account of your prospect of earthly comfort. Your greatest present danger probably will be the temptation to rest in these comforts. Be on your guard against this, my dear J——; and whilst, with all gratitude to God, you rejoice in His mercies, yet still remember that the Giver alone can fill and satisfy the soul. He requires our supreme affection to be placed on Himself; and if ever we begin to bestow that upon any creature, we speedily provoke Him to show us that the creature is that to us, and only that, which He make or permits it to be. If we make it an idol, He in mercy either takes it away, or permits it to become a trial, or a curse. Let us then, my dear J——, seek to glorify Him in His mercies; enjoying them according to His will.

‘Earth then a scale to heaven will be;’

every blessing will have a double relish, as descending from, and being a proof of our heavenly Father’s love;—and when, in the varied exercise of the same gracious paternal love, we are called to resign these earthly joys, we shall be prepared for His holy will, and in suffering find that His grace is sufficient for us; that He himself is the satisfying and enduring portion of His people.

“I need not say to you, ‘Keep up your fellowship with the church:’ but I would say, ‘Let all your

domestic arrangements be such as to make your attendance on the means of grace as little inconvenient as possible ; and never give up your attendance on them for mere social intercourse, however pleasant. Do not be much abroad, on any pretext whatever.' That married women should be 'keepers at home,' is an inspired instruction to them ; and has never been abrogated, nor can be, by any changes in civilized society. You know my sentiments on that subject ; therefore I need only just say, that I am more and more convinced of the supreme importance of domestic diligence, and constant superintendence of every part of her own affairs, in every married woman. The range of her duties varies of course with her station in life, and her pecuniary means ; but the spirit of them is the same. You will find her duties in detail by the pen of inspiration, in the last chapter of Proverbs. Study that well ; and with prayer and faith follow after that model. My dear J——, I know, will take kindly what I say on this subject. A good beginning in this, as in all other great designs, is all-important. It is easier to prevent evils than to remedy them. Happy they who do not buy all their wisdom by painful and costly experience.

"How much depends upon a wife's influence !
May the Lord bless and keep you, prays

"Your affectionate Friend,

"JANE GIBSON."

The state of the universal church during the last few years, was often the occasion of much serious thought with Mrs. Gibson. The heresies which have sprung up, the schisms and rents in many churches, the spirit of party, the defections in

professors, and the removal of so many holy and honoured veterans in the cause of Christ, were subjects which often caused her to mourn in secret places before the Lord. Dishonour done to the name of Christ she felt as keenly as most feel a personal injury. To the peculiar trials of her own church she was most sensitively alive: it was to her as "the burden" of the prophets, and she could not keep silence. She made every effort which her sex and circumstances would allow, to counteract the industriously-spread and malignant poison; by opposing truth to falsehood; by increased exertions on behalf of the church of God; and especially, where the weakest may be as David, by much prayer for a signal effusion of "the Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind," upon the Ministers whom she loved for their work's sake. She lived to see the subsidence of the popular clamour, the consolidation of the whole economy of Methodism by the highest legal decisions, the practical proofs of the efficiency of its discipline for the defence of the peaceable, as well as the correction of the factious, and the restoration of general external peace. But to some of us, she expressed strong desires to see the season of triumph improved to the highest advantage, and not rested in; and devoutly prayed that such a temple might ever be filled with the cloud of the glory of the Lord.

I subjoin an extract of a letter written in November, 1834.

"WE also with you feel a deep interest in the Institution,* and intend to aid in its support.

* The Wesleyan Theological Institution at Hoxton, then just established.

never felt as I have done of late, the sorrows of our Zion; but I believe that by them we shall be purified as a church. The Lord's fan is in His hand: He is winnowing His floor. Circumstances of temptation are showing what is in the heart of man. It is a peculiar crisis with us as a Body; but I trust that the better part, both as to numbers and piety, will abide by the Constitution of Wesleyan Methodism. The more I see of human nature, the more I am satisfied that our church is quite democratical enough for its own safety. Did I not always feel and express to you a great jealousy of ——? Out of the society he will have much less harm in his power than in it.

‘ Chase this self-will through all my heart,
Through all its latent mazes there,’

is a prayer that one sees, more and more, to be an inspired one. Lord, enable us to watch against self!

“I am thankful to say, there is peace in our borders, and prosperity. While all around is agitation, the Holy Dove seems to manifest what is acceptable to God, by graciously visiting those who seek peace and pursue it.”

Mrs. Gibson's anxiety to see the prosperity of the various funds of Methodism, was very great, and prompted her to various schemes and efforts to augment their resources. She used her influence with others, both to procure subscriptions and donations, and to secure testamentary bequests, and in many instances with happy success.

CHAPTER X.

*Mrs. Gibson's Advancement in Piety—Revivals in the Church—
Last Entry in her Journal—Explosion of a Coal Mine—
Faith a Victory—Visits Stockton—Counsel in Affliction—
Her own Sufferings—Her Death—Her Spirit during her
last Illness.*

WE are now approaching the close of the life of Mrs. Gibson; and it will be our business to show, that not only her habitual piety prepared her for the event, but that her piety during the last two or three years of her life had been manifestly improving, as both the testimony of friends and her own correspondence abundantly prove. Extracts will be laid before the reader serving to illustrate this point.

In January 1833, she made the following statement of her spiritual prospects :—

“ I NEVER have been able since I commenced my Christian pilgrimage to look forward to its termination with so lively a hope, so realizing a faith in the unseen realities of eternity. I seem to have a degree of communion with those who have gone to that ‘ better country,’ to which I was before a stranger. I feel an overwhelming sense of my own nothingness, astonishment at the long suffering and tender mercy of God in Christ toward me, and a gracious ability to trust in Him for the perfecting of His work of holiness, that I may be prepared to see

Him as He is ! Amazing thought ! that the chief of sinners should be so redeemed !

“ It is fourteen years last Sunday, since the Lord vouchsafed to me his pardoning love : A night much to be remembered.”

TO MRS. T. W.

“ Newcastle, April 1st, 1834.

“ MY BELOVED FRIEND,

“ You have more than once heard of me since I received your last precious letter, or you should sooner have heard from me ; as I always desire to keep up in your mind that interest which shall lay me upon your heart in your approaches to the throne of grace. There I believe you do present me, and often do I feel a glow of gratitude to Him who graciously brought us together in years that are past. I always look upon that meeting as a special favour from the Lord ; and I believe I shall rejoice in it to all eternity. Eternity ! I think it is more and more present with me, influencing my opinions and anticipations on all things temporal. What a light is that which our God has graciously cast upon what is within the veil—in the land, otherwise, of thick darkness !

“ Since I saw you, I have been passing through various profitable dispensations, most of them more or less painful ; yet ordained by infinite Love and Wisdom for my good ; some of body, some of mind, some arising out of worldly things, aptly compared in the Scripture to thorns. But I thank God, that by all He has been humbling, weaning, teaching me to profit, and, I trust, preparing me for His future will ; giving me to see more of the excellency of that

divine principle of faith which alone enableth us to overcome. Blessed be God who giveth us the victory in any measure, through Jesus Christ ! But I want a fuller conformity to the mind of Jesus, and a closer walk with Him.

“ I am just upon the verge of an hour of trial from which nature shrinks. I thank Him that many of my distressing apprehensions concerning it have passed away, and all are mercifully mitigated ; but pain is a sore evil, and of that I have often, and at this time, no small share. Continue, my beloved friend, your supplications for me,

“ Have you ‘ Bennet’s Christian. Oratory ? ’ I have got it lately, and find it a very profitable work. The author has been almost a century entered into rest ; but the holy truths he has written are yet able to minister edification to those who read them. From Macknight on the Epistles too, I have, of late, derived much instruction. I am sure you will find much light cast upon that important portion of the Word of God, in its scope and general principles. I hope you find Boothroyd [Family Bible], to answer your expectations. Whatever helps us to understand the blessed word of God, is invaluable, and makes our leisure to peruse such books, a precious boon.

“ I feel very thankful that — takes no part in Church politics and squabbles. May we and ours ever be followers of peace and holiness.

“ Your very attached Friend.”

“ *Newcastle, October 28th, 1834.*

“ MY BELOVED FRIEND,

“ I QUITE agree with you in thinking that seasons of special revival are also seasons of peculiar tempta-

tion ; some arising out of the temperament of the instruments generally employed most conspicuously in the work ; some from the ignorance of the new converts, both of themselves and of Satan's devices ; many from that subtle sin, spiritual pride, lurking unsuspectedly, and working deceitfully, in the hearts even of God's people ; and which, I believe, is as great a hinderance to His 'doing many mighty works among us, as unbelief itself. O my dear friend, what views one gets as one's experience increases of the depth of human depravity, and of the amazing grace by which even that sink of iniquity may be cleansed ! If we are, in the good providence of God, permitted to meet again, I purpose to avail myself of your mature acquaintance with these matters, to increase my own knowledge of them. The fact which you remark upon, as to the difference between those 'who have gone straight on from the first to the pure love of God,' &c. is one which I had often observed in its effects, though that cause of the difference between such, and 'those who have often fallen and risen,' had never clearly presented itself to my mind. But I have long been persuaded that in cases of steadfast obedience and progression, there seemed to be a much closer communion with God, and a much more delicate spiritual perception, than in the unstable professor. This is likely to be the case, as I see more and more clearly that the order of the Divine administration is, 'To him that hath shall be given.'

"Both previous to and during the revival of God's work among us, there have been striking seasons of the Holy Spirit's sanctifying operations in the hearts of believers. One of the most remarkable of these occurred about a week ago, at our excellent

friend Mr. N——'s Thursday class. Himself, and nearly all present, experienced a special baptism of the Holy Spirit. All that were that night present, except one, were persons of confirmed piety, and, I understand, either obtained the blessing of sanctification for the first time, or had a renewed sealing of the Divine Spirit to the truth of His work in them. At the Band Meeting on Friday last, there was also a special work of the same blessed kind."

Mrs. Gibson writes in her Journal :—

"JANUARY, 27th 1835.—AGAIN I am permitted to record my gratitude to my God and Saviour on this, the anniversary of my adoption into His family. Sixteen years have passed away since I was enabled to rejoice in the pardon of my sins ; and I yet am permitted, through faith in the blood of Christ, to say, ' My Beloved is mine, and I am His.' The Lord is my portion, saith my soul ; I will trust in Him. But I have much ground for humiliation, in reflecting upon my many backslidings of heart and life during that period. I have not, as I might have done, gone on from strength to strength. But the Lord has had long patience with me. I do resolve, in His name, to pursue with greater diligence that purity of heart and life which is set before us in the Gospel of Jesus, without which I cannot be meet for an inheritance among the saints. Lord, I beseech Thee, help mine infirmities, and give me more of the spirit of prayer, that I may overcome fully all the corruption of my nature, and be renewed after the image of my Divine Saviour.

"The Wesleyan Theological Institution opened on the 26th, for the improvement of our junior Preachers. Lord, send down an abundant blessing upon this

effort to prepare instruments for Thy service ! Make them as polished shafts in Thy quiver ; and grant that every opposition, whether proceeding from prejudice, ignorance, or satanic malice, may be defeated by Thy wisdom and grace, and over-ruled for the good of Thy church and people, and for the glory of Thy great name. Even so, Lord Jesus ! Our eyes are up unto Thee ! Our expectation in the use of all scriptural and rational means, is yet only from Thee ! ”

Her last entry is as follows :—

“ JULY 5th, 1835.—The last few weeks have given occasion to the exercise of deep sympathy with the suffering around us, such as I scarcely ever experienced. The news of the death of our late valuable minister, Mr. Ward, which took place in Jamaica, on the 26th of March last, was a very severe shock. O Lord, remember the fatherless children of Thy servant ! Comfort and save them ! Supply his place to Thy church ; and seal the valuable instruction we received under his ministry, upon our hearts.

“ On the 11th of June, a sad calamity occurred in the Nuns’ Field, by the falling of three large houses which were nearly completed in their walls, roofs, &c., which buried many men in their ruins, and twelve lost their lives. On the 18th, the following Thursday, a still more awful and fatal occurrence took place at Wallsend Colliery. The mine blasted while one hundred and five men and boys were at work, between two and three in the afternoon. One hundred and one lost their lives ; four were rescued in the course of the next few days, alive, but much injured. Of those who were suddenly called

hence, were some very eminent Christians ; especially William Crister and Joseph Lawson ; tried disciples, whose loss will be severely felt at Wallsend."

The following letter refers to the above melancholy event :—

" *July 7th, 1835.*

" I HAVE of late felt deeply humbled under a sense of the amazing love of God to me and mine ; and do desire, while life shall last, to make a more grateful sacrifice of all I have and am to Him, than I have ever yet done. Are we indebted to — for that admirable article in the magazine for May,* 'An Address to Perfect Christians?' If I am mistaken, I am sure it would have her cordial approbation. So I think will those valuable papers in the magazines for July and August, signed 'Iota.' O, my dear, my heart of late has bled for our wounds as a people ! Truly may Methodism complain, that she has been wounded in the house of her friends. But yet there are encouragements. The Lord's fan is in His hand. Dare we say, ' May He thoroughly purge His floor?' He has been gathering some of the wheat into His garner hereabout of late, to our sorrow and dismay. Among the hundred sufferers at Wallsend, were three at least, of the choicest Christians, I believe, that our church could number,—William Crister, Joseph Lawson, and Thomas Reavley ; men who did indeed live for God alone, and who have long been as the lights of the world. As by a chariot of fire they have been translated ! O, that their mantle may fall upon some that yet linger among us ! Beside them, there were several youths

* The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine for 1835.

of true piety and great promise. Mr. Reay had eight (with Crister) in his class; and his feeling heart has deeply, keenly felt the sudden wrench of all at once being taken: he was greatly attached to them individually, and has mourned for them as a father in Israel. O, my dear B——, when you plead with God for the afflicted, remember us here. A heavy calamity befell us only a week previous to that, in the loss of twelve lives, (nearly all husbands and fathers,) by the fall of three houses in the Nuns' Field. Then we have sorrowed for the death of Mr. Ward, which came upon us like a thunderbolt. Ill can such men be spared at present. 'Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful are minished from among the children of men.' "

I am indebted to one of the members of Mrs. Gibson's class for the following valuable letters, as well as some already inserted.

"Newcastle, May 12th, 1835.

"MY BELOVED FRIEND,

....." I DARE say you have often felt the force of David's observation, 'Surely every man walketh in a vain show, and disquieteth himself in vain;' and whilst you maintain your Christian integrity, I fear not that your brief sojourn among persons of fashion will tend to convince you more deeply of the vanity of those things in which they place their hopes of happiness; and will lead you to place a higher value upon those things which are spiritual and eternal. Our Mr. K—— preached a most admirable sermon the other day on 1 John ii. 17, which brought you very forcibly before me. I have no doubt it would have been a word in season to you.

The comparison between the world and all it counts precious or desirable, and the least of those who do the will of God, set the vanity of the one, and the excellency of the other, in a striking light. Yes, my beloved friend, it is a grand truth, that all the objects which you at present hear magnified are passing away, with those who are chasing them; and in a short while, all will be forgotten, even on the only theatre where they are ambitious to be known or to appear; and all vain substitutes for religion will vanish too. But that, so briefly set forth in the text, will be found a reality: 'He that doeth the will of God,' and he alone, 'abideth for ever.' O, that we, my beloved friend, may be the doers of His will! Then shall we be blessed in our deed, and blessed in our end, and blessed through eternity; giving praise to Him who hath washed us, and sanctified us, and prepared us for glory, honour, and immortality.

"I hope you endeavour to avoid an unprofitable anxiety about the mode in which you ought to confess your Master. Sometimes silence is more wise and profitable than words. In looking upward for direction, I know you will obtain it. Study the conduct of our Divine Master Himself, and you will find a holy prudence as well as a holy courage pervading it. I would not, you know, have you shrink from confessing Him on all proper occasions; but I wish you to be delivered from some anxieties about the manner of doing this, which I think proceed from the Accuser, who desires to weaken and to harass you; and who, we know, seeks not to honour Christ.

* * * * *

"Yours ever, very affectionately,
"JANE GIBSON."

"Tynemouth, Aug. 17th, 1835.

"MY BELOVED FRIEND,

"I HAVE only been waiting for your letter to unburden my heart of some of the mighty debt of gratitude I owe to God, for His late and ever-renewed mercy to me; and I know that, as you have aided me by your prayers, so you will not fail to unite with me in praises to the God of my life, who has again lifted up my head. I am ready to exclaim, 'Where shall my wondering soul begin?' For when I reflect upon the goodness of God, I am indeed 'lost in wonder, love, and praise.' In the dreaded season of suffering, I was so graciously sustained, all the circumstances were so providentially ordered, my mind kept so composed, that I could not doubt that the Lord had heard and answered the prayers of those who love me; and in honour of our great High Priest, through whom they were offered, He caused His mercy to abound towards me. But still it was a bitter cup. The curse is in it. That idea is always present with me; and I suppose that until I taste death itself, I shall never have a deeper view than I get, in those seasons, of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which could draw down such a penalty upon even ransomed sinners. But then, my dear friend, through the efficacy of the atoning blood, these sufferings may be sanctified; and to the children of God they work together for good, and are means of grace to the soul. This, I thank God, I have experienced in some degree. 'Tribulation worketh patience.' All the passive graces in suffering are exercised. I thank God, I have felt it a time of humiliation before Him. Surrounded as I was with every comfort and alleviation, which either kindness or skill could afford, how deeply did I feel

my unworthiness of the mercy thus manifested to me !

..... "So I trust we shall yet again be permitted to reside near each other. Few events of life could afford me so much pleasure in the prospect ; and as I believe our intercourse would be for our mutual benefit, I venture to look forward to it, with submission to the will of God. O my dear friend, if I had not faith in God, and rest through faith, I should be a miserable being ; for I have such a growing sense of the vanity of all created things, that I dare not rely for any good upon them, but in and through Jesus Christ. I never saw as I do now, never felt, however, the necessity of having the world overcome. I am satisfied from experience and observation, that it must either be overcome, or it will overcome us. Its name is Legion. Its snares are innumerable ; and so subtle, that only the Spirit of God can enable us to discern them. Then its deceitfulness ! I see it equally a cheat, whether its proposed good be attained or missed. Satisfaction is not to be had by its votaries.

"This is all very trite, but very true ; and I feel it from time to time come to my heart with all the force of novelty.

"I do feel thankful for your better health, and external comfort ; but most of all because I know that in these you rest not, but use and enjoy them, as God intended, for refreshment in the wilderness ; still confessing by words and deeds, that you are a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth, and seeking a city, an abiding home. I feel my heart drawn toward that home, and all its blessed inhabitants, as I never did before. I think more about heaven than I used to do. Lord, fit me for it !

"As to Conference news: the Lord has been most signally manifest in the midst of His servants, as a Spirit of Wisdom and of Grace. He is overruling the late trials of His church for the purifying of it; and will, I believe, bless us as a people, with greater unity and stability by them all. 'He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder He restrains.'

"Ever yours, most affectionately,

"JANE GIBSON."

"I do not know how it may be with you, but I feel increasing pleasure from the contemplation of the bounty of our Heavenly Father in the beauties of creation, and the varied aspects which the changing seasons, with all their unnumbered displays of His goodness, wisdom, and love, afford. I find the reading of works on this subject, such as White's Natural History of Selbourne, Howitt's Book of the Seasons, the Journal of a Naturalist, Mudie's British Birds, &c., highly conducive both to pleasure and profit. By enlarging one's acquaintance with the world around us, it fits us for a higher enjoyment of every sight and sound of sylvan nature. To the young especially, I consider it a very desirable kind of knowledge, opening up one of the purest and most independent sources of pleasure, and of healthy recreation. By the way, if you have not seen Mudie's British Birds, you would find it one of the most interesting books of the kind which has ever been published; embellished with the most novel and gratifying sketches (coloured wood-cuts) of all the birds that belong to or visit this country."

During the last five or six years of Mrs. Gibson's life, her health was for the most part delicate. She

frequently suffered from indigestion. In the spring of 1835, she had a very severe attack of influenza, which made a deep impression on her constitution, and from its effects she perhaps never fully recovered; for it was not only a great shock to her physical strength, but also to her spirits; and events which she had formerly met with calm fortitude, she now anticipated with some anxiety. In the month of July, 1835, she gave birth to her seventh child; but a bilious attack prostrated her strength; and as soon as she could be removed, she was taken to Tynemouth for the benefit of sea-air and bathing. Here Mrs. G. pursued the great business of her life, to do good to others. She never left home without a supply of religious tracts; and some of these she disposed of at that watering-place with advantage to many. On the 1st of October, she paid a long-promised visit to her kind friends, Mrs. and Miss Walker, of Stockton, and returned on the 10th. This visit was greatly sanctified, and was undoubtedly among the means employed by her Heavenly Father to perfect the work of grace in her soul.

“OUR last interview,” observes Mrs. T. Walker, “was most blessed. We then saw, (but alas! never thought what remained to be developed!) a special Providence had brought us together. About ten days my beloved Jane and I communed freely with each other. She could not, at any time, converse on trifling topics; but on this occasion I was particularly struck with this,—that all other, however otherwise important and interesting, were merged in spiritual and eternal subjects. These so occupied her attention, and on them she dilated with such enlargement of view, and ardour of desire and affec-

tion, that I verily thought her spirit was too elevated to be long confined

‘ Within the narrow bounds of this dim spot
Which men call earth.’

Grace had well-refined all her powers ; and I marked with delight how the stronger faculties of her uncommon mind were softened down in the mould of simplicity and love.

“ You will be interested in our last conversation. Late on the evening before her departure, I went up stairs with her. She told me of a pain in her right shoulder, about which I felt concerned ; for at the supper-table, I thought her appearance much altered. I also expressed my sympathy with her in reference to a great trial which had just come upon her. She checked me by saying, ‘ My dear Caroline, I can hardly look at it ; for I am persuaded much worse may come. If my dear husband, I, and my children richly enjoy the grace and favour of God, it is all I desire.’ We prayed ; and on rising from our knees, she took me by the hand, and smiling, said, ‘ I have one favour to ask of you.’ I made a reply, little thinking that she referred to the probability of her early removal from this world. I lay down that night thoughtful ; yet thankful, that, if we never met again, our parting interview had been just what we should wish it, in the event of such a painful issue.”

The intimations which the reader would observe in the above conversation, that Mrs. Gibson had a presentiment of the fatal issue of this illness, were not the only hints which she gave to her friends on this subject. Her sister, since the event, has been convinced that this was the key to many conversations not then understood, and many circumstances which before

were inexplicable. Some months previous to her last illness, in the dead of night she observed to her husband, "I believe I shall not live long." On being asked why she entertained such a thought, she only replied, "I have a firm persuasion of it." When she and her dear sister were one day sitting in the library, she said, "I have been thinking much on death and eternity. It will be a bitter separation when we are called to part." Her sister observed, "My dear, I hope there is no probability that we shall be separated for many years to come." She replied, with considerable emphasis, "But it will come, and it will be a bitter separation." Miss Gibson observes, "One can scarcely believe that I could listen to such a conversation as this, without understanding its import. But such was the fact. It never struck me that death was to separate us."

The following letters were written after her return from Stockton, and show how intent she was "well to fill up the allotted space" of her brief life.

"Newcastle, October 12th, 1835.

"MY DEAR MRS. M——

"A FEW days ago, whilst I was on a visit at Stockton, I heard from my sister, with a deep and sincere sympathy, that it had pleased God in His inscrutable Providence to sever your nearest and dearest tie. I felt the more deeply for you as the shock to me was sudden; for I had never heard of Mr. M. being ill. But I know you are in affliction; and I am a follower of Him who bids us weep with them that weep; and I know that at such a season, when the heart feels its loneliness, it may be a consolation to you to receive an assurance, that, though distant, you are not forgotten by those who have

mingled their tears with yours in many a former bereavement. Those past scenes are deeply engraven on my heart. The solemnities of death, and of judgment, and of eternity, were in them brought before me with deep impression. Years have rolled on since I witnessed the last of these; your dear sister M——, whose eyes I closed on the morning of January 28th, 1825. Never can I forget the anxious look she had while listening to my feeble, but earnest endeavours to lead her to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. I trust she obtained mercy through His atoning blood. But O, my dear F——, when I saw the agony of her spirit, on the verge of eternity, and struggling with the pangs of death, and yet unassured of her interest in the Saviour, I was more deeply convinced than ever of the sin and danger of leaving the great business of life to its latest hour. Many a time since, has that solemn lesson been impressed upon my soul by the Holy Spirit of God, the only effectual Teacher, the only source of light and love in the minds of our sinful race. And now, my dear F——, I seize the opportunity presented to me by your present affliction, to inquire how it is with you. Your nearest earthly friend is taken. You are left for awhile; how long, no one knoweth. O that He in whose hand are the issues of life and death, may bring the important question home with conviction to your heart! O suffer not the world and its concerns so to occupy your mind as to distract your attention from the solemn lesson this event is so graciously intended to impress! Eternity is before us; in time only can we prepare for it. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. If our hearts are set upon the world, its cares, its riches, its enjoyments, we shall

reap disappointment even in this life, and at last lose our souls. What is it to lose the soul? No mortal tongue can calculate that loss.

“My dear F——, I write with all faithfulness and affection to you, because I know you are not much associated with those who see these things in their true light, as they are revealed to us by the word and Spirit of God. He hath said, ‘Give me thy heart:’ no other offering will God accept. If we would serve and please Him, he must be the supreme object of our love. And He only can satisfy the longings of an immortal spirit. The world promises much, but performs little. It deceives all who trust in it for happiness. O be not you of the number whom it leads onward in the broad, thronged path to perdition. O pray that the Spirit of God may so show you the realities of eternity as to lead you to prefer them as your portion, to all the vanities of time! What do they avail in a dying hour? Seek out a heart-searching ministry. Let no considerations prevent you from preferring that place of worship where you can have the great truths of the Gospel most faithfully set before you.....Many have, through his instrumentality, been savingly converted to God. May you be added to the number! But O be in earnest! and be in earnest now! To-day is the day of salvation. I speak of the value of a spiritual acquaintance with religion, my dear F——, from a blessed experience of twice seven years. Have I repented, that then, by the grace of God, I began to serve him? Ah no; all my chief happiness here below is in God, to whom I have been reconciled by the death of His Son. And is this because I have no earthly joys? Far from it. By the bounty of my heavenly Father, I am surrounded with mercies.

But I feel, that whatever happiness is vouchsafed to me through these, is still from God ; and in this is my chief joy. He is my salvation ; and without Him all earthly comforts would be unsatisfying.

“ Let me then commend this religion to you. It makes me happy in life ; and in death it will be the only source of peace and hope.

.....“ I am but poorly. My babe is three months old. I am going about, but have not yet recovered my strength. But I know that all things concerning me are ordered by Infinite Wisdom and Love. I desire that in all things His will may be done ; only that by all His dispensations I may be made more holy, and more fit for His service so long as He shall see fit to continue me here ; and more fit for dwelling with Him above, where nothing unholy can ever enter.”

To another friend, she writes :—

“ It is very agreeable to me to know that you are so deeply interested in what concerns me. Your precious letters always call forth my gratitude and praise to God for the blessings of Christian communion. I had a very deep conviction, that the time of my visit to Stockton was graciously ordered by Divine Providence ; and I am now fully convinced that it was a special preparation for what has followed. Such a season of bodily suffering I never before experienced,—but so mixed with mercy ! yet still a bitter cup ; only, as being from the hand of my heavenly Father, I have been enabled so far to receive it with humble resignation, in faith that it will prove a salutary remedy for the diseases of the soul. O my beloved friend, what exercises have I

had for my faith in severe pain, languor, and utter sleeplessness ! Last night I did indeed feel 'cast on the fidelity of my redeeming Lord.' I had not slept night or day for a week. All my other symptoms are graciously alleviated ; but such is the excitement of the nerves, that sleep cannot be procured. My constitution resists opium. I tried a hop pillow last night, but all in vain, until it shall please God to give me sleep, which I believe would restore me sooner than aught else. O my dear friend, 'on what a slender thread hang everlasting things !' "

TO THE LATE MRS. M'ALLUM.

" MY DEAR FRIEND,

" WE were this morning favoured with a call from Mr. M'Allum, from whom we heard the painful account of your increasing suffering and weakness. I scarcely need say that we deeply sympathize in your afflictions, and shall not fail to offer up our fervent supplications to the throne of grace on your behalf. In this we have the fullest assurance that we shall obtain the desire of our hearts, that the will of the Lord may be fully accomplished, and that, when your sufferings are ended, you may, 'through consecrated pains,' be found meetened for a sight of Him whose glory will banish in an instant every remembrance of ages of woe. O my beloved friend, if we were but entered there ! My soul of late has been much drawn to the contemplation of that unseen world. Perhaps my own weakness, and frequent and increasing ailments, have made death a more familiar subject of meditation with me than it used to be, and though I feel the strong ties of nature and affection,

which bind me to earth, and which lead me to think my abiding here a little longer might be of some advantage to them, yet I see great desirableness in 'the rest that remaineth for the people of God.' You have already passed through the sorrows which have cut the strings, and have only to await in humble resignation and joyful hope the divine call, 'Come up hither.' May the Lord grant you such abounding consolation, while yet you are drinking of the cup of suffering, as shall sustain and sanctify you through it all! If you should so far revive as to be able to see me, I should feel it a privilege once more to embrace you; but if not on earth, I trust we shall meet at the right hand of the Father.

"Your very attached Friend,

"JANE GIBSON."

Immediately after Mrs. Gibson's return from Stockton, it was found to be necessary again to call in medical aid. Her symptoms soon assumed all the features of neuralgia, one of the most distressing and intractable diseases to which suffering humanity is liable. Mr. Nesham observes: "The paroxysm generally came on in the evening, and gradually increased in violence until one or two in the morning, and then gradually abated, leaving her, if not entirely free, yet comparatively so, until the following evening. Her sleep now entirely forsook her; and I do not think that she enjoyed one hour's calm repose for four weeks. Her general health suffered greatly, not only from the acuteness of her pain, but also from an almost total inability to take food. To mitigate the severity of the paroxysms, and to overcome the disease, I believe almost every remedy, local and general, was tried; but frequently that

which was used with apparent success to-day was useless on the morrow."

On the evening of the 3rd of November, while her sister was sitting by her, she seemed restless ; and on Miss Gibson's inquiring the cause, she put her hand to the back part of her neck, and complained of great pain there. Miss Gibson observing a change in her voice, and a degree of indistinctness of articulation, inquired if she had any thing in her mouth. She said, "No." Her sister then desired that she would speak distinctly ; and she immediately replied, "I do speak distinctly." In a few moments afterwards, unobserved by her sister, she rose from the sofa to reach a chair by the fire-side ; and before Miss Gibson could lift her eyes from her work, she was prostrate on the floor. Paralysis had intervened, with a loss of power on the left side, and a partial loss of mental energy. The blessing of God upon the active remedies employed, in a few days restored her from the effects of this attack. But, alas ! it soon became evident that her nervous system had sustained a serious, if not an irreparable, shock, and her ultimate recovery became a matter of doubt and anxiety. Her own mind was increasingly persuaded that the issue would be fatal, as many remarks made to her friends clearly indicated. From this time, however, she had little or no pain, and the former acute nervous affection had quite left her. But her system could not be rallied. The nervous energy was not sufficient to keep the stomach, lungs, and heart in full play ; the action of the latter especially being so weak, that the pulse could scarcely be felt.

On the 19th of November, Mrs. Gibson was again

removed to Tynemouth for the benefit of sea-water shower-baths, and returned on the last day of the month, evidently weaker than when she left home. Still her friends fondly hoped for her recovery.

In the course of Monday night she appeared to slumber; but at five o'clock on Tuesday morning, she was seized with difficulty of breathing; and although it soon subsided, it returned with increased inconvenience at eight. She observed to her dear husband, that this was a new symptom. Mr. Nesham, her faithful friend, was sent for. He found her pulse quite gone, the extremities cold, and every intimation of her approaching end. All were now painfully convinced that the silver cord was being loosed. Her afflicted husband stood on one side of her dying couch, supporting her head; on the other, stood her affectionate and faithful sister, who, with a heart almost bursting with grief, and able only with great difficulty to articulate the words, said, "My dear Jane, you are just entering the gates of Paradise; are you happy?" With great calmness and firmness she replied, "YES, ALL IS WELL." She was asked if she wished to see the dear children; but the ties to earth were dissolved; nature was subdued, and could no more; and she quietly said, "No." It was then inquired if she had any thing to say. She faintly replied, "I cannot speak." She was evidently engaged with her friends in prayer, and without a struggle, or sigh, or groan, her spirit passed away to the blessed haven of everlasting rest; exchanging the prayers of earth for the praises of heaven, about nine o'clock on Tuesday morning, December 8th, 1835. "So He giveth His beloved sleep."

"She set as sets the morning star, which goes
Not down behind the darken'd west, nor hides
Obscured among the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven."

Those who had opportunities of marking the character and spirit of Mrs. Gibson during the last eighteen months of her life, perceived in her a rapid advancement in the divine life. She was daily dying to the world, and the fruits of righteousness were evidently acquiring a mellowness which indicated either a preparation for extraordinary usefulness, or a speedy removal. She became more zealous for God, and more tenderly affectionate to all her relatives. She was more gentle, tender, and compassionate to the faults and failings of others. Her life became one continued act of faith, prayer, and thanksgiving; and her only desire was to be conformed to the will of God.

This maturing process of divine grace was perceived by many, and especially in her class-meetings, in her home, and in the new efforts she made on behalf of the cause of God. And it was attended, to her own soul, with some of the most delightful and profitable manifestations of the power and grace of Christ.

"On one occasion," observes her sister, "having been pressed down with the prospect of an overwhelming affliction, she went to the house of God. On returning, with a countenance more than usually irradiated, she said, 'My dear Susanna, I have been so blessed while at chapel! I have brought my hymn-book for you to read the hymn. It has been exceedingly blessed to my own mind.' She then read to me the 675th hymn, beginning,

'Away my needless fears,
And doubts no longer mine,' &c.

"In the morning, as my custom was, I hastened to my beloved Jane, not expecting to find her in the state of mind I did; but how happy was I to perceive that all anxiety on the subject which had oppressed her, was gone! Her face was beaming with heavenly peace; and such an expression of acquiescence in the will of God, whatever it might be, as I cannot convey to you. I think it right to say, that no way was then visible by which the dreaded calamity might be averted; but the assurance, that, if permitted, it should be to the glory of God, so subdued every feeling, that she now only chose His will."

To her old and tried friend, Mrs. Morrison, she observed on her return from Stockton: "I seem to myself as if I had never done any thing. I am resolved to work for God, as I have never done;" and smiling, added, "I have set out afresh." At the next interview, when disease had made more painful encroachments, she said, "You see how my resolutions are frustrated: I am laid by, doing nothing." Mrs. Morrison replied: "It was a great work you had in view; but now the Lord is teaching you to suffer, as well as to do His will." On the morning after the paralytic attack, she again called, and found Mrs. Gibson exceedingly depressed in spirits; the tear was rolling down her cheek; and Mrs. Morrison observed to her: "This is not like Mrs. Gibson." She replied: "It is hard work to smile when the body is severely afflicted." Conversation on rejoicing in affliction, however, soon elevated her spirits; and on her friend quoting, "Bless the Lord, O my

soul;" Mrs. Gibson joyfully took up the theme, and repeated nearly the whole psalm.

Wesley's Hymns were frequently made a source of comfort to her. From the commencement of her illness to its close, in the intervals of ease, she employed herself in reading; and, at other times, desired some one to read to her, occasionally Clark's "Scripture Promises," but generally the Scriptures.

It has been remarked, that "there is a season in every Christian's experience, in which, like his blessed Master, he is left alone." Who that has watched the moral progress of a final affliction, has not perceived that there is usually an hour of fierce conflict, in which satan spends his strength, and after which the tempter flies? "Then the devil leaveth Him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." It is believed that whilst at Tynemouth, Mrs. Gibson passed through these scenes of fearful spiritual conflict. There, alone, her sister believes she passed the hour of darkness; and greatly does she regret that she did not remain with her during the whole time, that at least she might have sympathized with her in her sorrows. On their meeting, Mrs. Gibson would advert to death, a subject from which her sister, suspecting its reference, naturally averted her attention. "You are not about to die." "My dear, it is a subject which demands much serious consideration."

But so far from such consideration producing gloominess, she felt that "death cannot come untimely to him who is fit to die." Her mind during the whole of that day appeared to be uncommonly elevated above earthly objects. It was, perhaps, in allusion to the above season of "dreadful fight," that she observed to a kind friend who visited her at

Tynemouth, after reading 1 Peter i., that her affliction had been a severe one; adding, "The best that can be said of it is, that it has been a 'fiery trial.'"

In the last note her dear sister received from Mrs. Gibson, written while at Tynemouth, and I presume the last she ever wrote, she says,—

"DAY and night wear away; and I am thankful to say, that I hope I am on the whole improving; but the process is a painful one. However, I know who sitteth as the Refiner; and I feel confident He will not subject me a moment longer to the furnace, nor suffer it to be a degree hotter, than is absolutely necessary for the great and gracious end He has in all. I feel stripped, emptied, humbled. My soul is as a weaned child. Lord, grant that every purifying effect may be permanent!"

After Mrs. Gibson's return from Tynemouth, she expressed her gratitude for having been brought home again. A friend having manifested some surprise, that she should leave a home where she was surrounded with all that could contribute to her comfort, she replied, "I thought it right to use all the means within my reach for my restoration." Her gratitude to all who attended upon her was remarkable, and was frequently expressed to her servants. She never partook of either food or medicine, without asking God's blessing upon it, and returning Him thanks. She was most unwilling to give trouble, and often showed greater anxiety for the comfort of others than for her own; frequently observing, "My Lord was not thus attended. 'The servant is above his Lord.'"

For Mr. Nesham's kind attentions during the whole period of her married life, she said she never

could be sufficiently thankful. Speaking of the attentions of her friends, she said, "My wants are not supplied ;—they are anticipated."

During a paroxysm of severe pain, when her dear husband and sister were sitting beside her, taking hold of the hand of each, she said, with a look of ineffable sweetness, "How happy I am to have all those about me whom I wish to have !"

At another time, Mrs. Gibson said, "Susanna, when I die, I hope you will not sorrow immoderately for me. It would grieve me ;" and, again repeating it, "It would grieve me ; it will displease God, and bring darkness on your own soul."

Her solicitude on behalf of her dear children, was very great ; and, in reference to the boys especially, urged that they should on no account be placed in situation, where their moral and religious principles might be endangered. No tempting prospect of intellectual or worldly advantage, she hoped, would ever lead to the hazard of such temptations as young men are frequently exposed to, by sending them abroad.

Would that Christian parents, who have taken more or less pains with the religious education of their children, and, in the main, desire to see them Christians also, would heed this ! How many in placing their sons where they may complete their education, or as apprentices, or pupils to a profession, make the security of their moral and religious character the last consideration, and sometimes exclude it altogether ! In their laudable anxiety to secure to them the first worldly advantages, they hazard the shipwreck of the principles of their faith, and a good conscience. And whether this be done wilfully, with a certain foresight of the possible or probable issue,—

or carelessly, by a total exclusion of this prime question in considering the eligibility of a situation,—the guilt may differ, but the consequences are nearly the same. It is in vain that we lament the plague, when we have placed him in the midst of the infection. Our regrets, like those which arise from the consequences of neglected early discipline, come too late. A mischief is done which we cannot undo. Nothing but an extraordinary effort of grace can reach the case, that we have put out of the ordinary administration of mercy. And even our hope is in a great measure withered; for in our last resource, prayer, we cannot forget that our sinful neglect or presumption, has driven us upon the temptation to expect succour when we have departed from the path of duty. And it is written: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

But, to return: From the commencement to the close of Mrs. Gibson's illness, she never mentioned any thing to her friends which might lead them to suppose she did not expect to recover; and this only to spare their feelings. Through the whole of her very painful affliction, she evinced the greatest calmness and resignation; and the most childlike docility in reference to the treatment which her disease required. When the pain in the nerves of the shoulder had been very acute, depriving her of several nights' rest, she said to her sister, with much earnestness, "Pray for me, my dear, that my patience may not give way."

One day Mrs. Gibson observed to her dear sister, "I have been thinking what is the lesson the Lord intends me to learn by this affliction; and I believe I have to learn to feel more tenderly for others who are afflicted; and through this affliction I have to

acquire more zeal for God. When I am well, I intend to be more frequently at the prayer-meetings." At another time she said, "My dear, we must pray more frequently and fervently for the conversion of and and;" for her conviction was always strong, that the convincing Spirit is vouchsafed to individuals thus borne up before God in the prayers of His children. She was equally anxious herself fully to inherit this portion of the spiritual inheritance of God's people; often requesting the prayers of her friends, and also of the pious poor to whom she gave or sent her alms; and in this season of deep affliction frequently observing, "I never knew the value of having an interest in the prayers of the people of God as I do now."

To Miss Spencer, who had long enjoyed the privilege of an unrestricted intimacy, and had had the full benefit of her spiritual counsels and prayers, she said, "The process seemed so severe that it would soon be over." Speaking of her affliction she intimated, that she saw it to be an answer to prayers which she had long since forgotten. Several times in the course of the day, she repeated,

" 'Refining fire go through my heart.' "

"I feel my affliction to be a refining fire. People generally are not aware of the import of such a petition. We must look well, my dear, to the motives of our actions; and be especially careful to cultivate humility; for, in fact, we have no more religion than we have humility."

On the Sabbath previous to Mrs. Gibson's death, her dear husband asked her if she would like him to request the prayers of the congregation in Brunswick,

chapel; to which she gladly consented. The circumstance alarmed the fears of many of her friends, and inquiries respecting her were very numerous during the day. Her sister named this circumstance, and quoted, "Them that honour Me, I will honour." She shrunk from the application, and said, "It has been little more than my intention to have honoured Him." On the same day, in sending her last message of tenderness to a brother whom she had loved with an uncommon affection, she said, "Tell him my mind is in perfect peace, and I am waiting to know what is the will of the Lord concerning me."

After the morning service, her dear friend, Mrs. Morrison, called upon her, and informed her of the gracious influence which descended whilst the minister was interceding on her behalf; and observed, "I hope you can look up with confidence." "Yes, yes, in the blood of Christ. I never felt the value of church-fellowship, of Christian communion, as I do now." The next day she said, "It will now soon be known what medicine can do for me; if that fail, you will be with me at the last. But whether I live or die, I am the Lord's."

So true is it, that "to sustain a fit of sickness, may exhibit as true heroism as to lead an army; and to meet death with Christian resolution, is an act of courage in which many a woman has triumphed, and many a philosopher, and even some generals, have failed."

Upon the dear children, who occasionally came in to see their mother, she implored many a blessing. On the evening of the Monday before her death, when they were about to retire for the night, her

sister asked if they should come in. With a look which seemed to say that she thought an apology was needed for the answer, she replied, "No." Perhaps Mrs. Gibson felt that it was needful in this case to exercise her utmost self-denial ; since, although she felt that she could now yield them up to God, she knew not what might be the result of so tender an interview ; or perhaps it might in a great measure be attributed to that mysterious operation of Divine grace of which we have often been witnesses, where the spiritual affections so far triumph over the natural, as almost to anticipate that perfect state where the distinctions of our present social relations are no longer needed, and shall therefore be abolished ; and all the instincts and love which now arise from them shall be absorbed and sublimated by the pure love of God. Certainly we find many instances in which, on their approach to "*that world*," our friends have shown a comparative forgetfulness, a sort of alienation, which is deeply painful to those who yet feel the strong ties of consanguinity. Perhaps, in the instance of those of our departing friends whose conjugal and parental love we cannot doubt, it is one of the last and most gracious operations of the sanctifying Spirit, thus finally and gently to dissolve the most tender ties by which their spirits are united to a body of flesh, and linked to a world of natural relationship and earthly affections. And this may be the first experimental intimation of the nature of that world where spiritual affections are the only bond of union ; for "they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage : neither can they die any more : for they are equal unto the angels ; and are

the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Whilst we are mourning the loss of so many of our friends by death, let it be our great and constant labour to "be imitators of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises." In their case, the links which are broken off from the chain of natural affection by which we are held to this vain, mortal life, are but added to that by which we are drawn toward heaven and God. We are united, although they are separated from us; and they are present with us, although unseen. We make but one "family;" they are "in heaven," and we "on earth." They, as well as we, "live unto God;" for "He is not ashamed to be called their God;" and "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

CHAPTER XI.

Mrs. Gibson's intellectual Character—Soundness of Judgment—Regard for Principles—Not content with Mediocrity—Testimony of John Fenwick, Esq.—Accomplishments—Conversation—Temper—Decision—Friendships—Character as a Wife, Mother, and Mistress—Religious Character—Well-grounded in the Truth—Deference to the Word of God—Practical Result of her first religious Reading—Her Piety evangelical, fervent, devotional, reverent—Testimony of the Rev. James Everett—Her Religion, self-denying and practical—Appropriation of Time and Money—Connezion with public Institutions in Newcastle—Her Benevolence—Care of the Poor—Mrs. Gibson a decided Methodist—Regard for Discipline—Catholic and liberal—Her Religion, domestic, its chief Praise—Sketch of her Character by the Rev. Isaac Keeling—Conclusion—An Example to the Young ; to Christians ; and to Mothers especially—Epitaph.

It will now be my pleasing, melancholy duty to present to my readers a sketch of the character of Mrs. Gibson. My intercourse with her, both personal and epistolary, since the year 1826, embraced the most important period of her life ; and I had abundant opportunity of observing every feature of her character. I was appointed to labour in the Newcastle Circuit, just at the time she returned to her own country ; and during the three years which I spent in that place, among a people distinguished for their social and religious intercourse, our friendship became consolidated. I think I knew her well. To say that she was an uncommonly talented woman, and an eminently pious and useful Christian, is only to echo universal testimony. But I must confess,

that, highly as I appreciated her character whilst living, my opinion of her excellencies has been greatly enhanced, since I began these Memoirs. What I know I shall state; convinced that Mrs. Gibson's personal and intimate friends will not accuse me of exaggeration; and that they who are acquainted with her only by these memorials, will be satisfied with the adduced evidence, and the testimony of a few who knew her intimately, and whose judgment is too discriminating to have given an excessive colouring to the sketches which they have kindly furnished.

The most casual interview with Mrs. Gibson was sufficient to convince any person that she was a clever woman. Indeed, this impression was sometimes too powerful, particularly among some of her own sex, and especially on first acquaintance: for you immediately perceived how fully you were appreciated. This slight appearance of unapproachableness was, however, more in manner and appearance than in disposition and reality. She could never enjoy that society in which she could neither learn nor teach; and a just sensitiveness on this point she never lost.

Her judgment was sound, discriminating, and practical. In childhood, she was distinguished by great vivacity both of spirits and of imagination; but when the realities of life came upon her, and the full power of reason was awakened, imagination was so controlled that she did not appear to possess that faculty in a high degree. The deliberative predominated over the inventive. This was a happy result of the course of her studies and discipline, which were more calculated to cultivate reason than to indulge imagination; and she reaped a corresponding

advantage. Her judgment was cool and undisturbed, and more free from the bias of prejudice and passion, than is the lot of most persons. And she was thus rendered more secure in her principles and consistent in her conduct.

A good acquaintance with history, a close and searching observation of mankind, a diligent and submissive study of the Scriptures, and, above all, a constant scrutiny of her own heart, under the teachings of the Divine Spirit, made hers an exceedingly practical judgment.

Mrs. Gibson had early learned to distinguish between things that differ; to view eternal things in their true character; and to appeal to the highest standard of opinion and principle. To the early soundness of her religious principles, we must attribute many of the excellencies of her mind. She thus gained a deep conviction of the immense value of time, and became through life a rigid economist of its golden sands. She also thus obtained that sense of her solemn obligations as a rational and accountable being, which ever cleaved to her; and from these considerations she was induced, by principle as much as preference, to cultivate her own gifts to the utmost.

Her mind was comprehensive and versatile, and could with singular readiness embrace any subject, both in its principles and details. Although evidently formed for generalization, and grappling with difficulties, she could work through the details of ordinary business with ease.

Mrs. Gibson possessed much of that which Locke calls "large, sound, round-about sense, which takes a full view of all that relates to the question, and may be of moment to decide it;" and the following,

faithful sketch, although drawn by her own hand, will illustrate this point :—

“ I DELIBERATE a great deal, in my way ; but it is in the general. I endeavour to settle my principles ; and having done this, on what I believe to be the firmest bases, I apply these settled general principles to particular instances and act on them. Where my data are not sufficient, or are incorrect, or my experience is defective, I shall be likely to be wrong in my *postulata*, as the schoolmen would say ; but I think I can with truth observe, that I am ever ready to be convinced of error, and desirous to rectify it. On the face of what I do, there may often seem an inconsideration, which does not in reality belong to it. ‘ In the multitude of my thoughts within me,’ that subject has perhaps been long and deeply revolved. It is this which gives energy and decision to what I say and do. It is this which enables me, notwithstanding seeming parentheses, to read straight forward, in the Book of Providence especially. It is written within and without, ‘ Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? ’ The eye of faith beholds, in addition to this verdict of reason regarding Infinite Wisdom, ‘ love ’ inscribed upon it all. In the last Magazine there is an excellent extract from Dr. South ‘ on the Submission of the Understanding to God.’ I thank God for having so far submitted mine. It is on this foundation that all my little religion stands. It is a foundation that standeth sure. A moment’s reflection on this, often quells insurrection among my other faculties, and prevents the factious principles of pride and unbelief from producing rebellion and darkness in my soul. It is chiefly in enlarging my views of the character of

God, and justifying His ways to man, that my reading profits me. You know the general style of it. It is to me in the furnishing of general principles, what the reading of religious experience is to many, who are more pleased and profited by particular facts and instances. I can with humble thankfulness say, that, during the last two years, I have learned more of God and of His word, than I ever did in twice that period before. My trust and love are, I hope, in some corresponding degree increased ; but I have learned more of myself ; I see more my own weakness and depravity. I rejoice with trembling. In your singular fitness to be my friend, I see an amazing and touching proof of the wisdom and grace of God. To your superior judgment and discrimination I greatly defer, though you may sometimes see reason to doubt it. Its impression is never lost on me. It has a general influence upon my conduct, and has contributed more to the modification and formation of my character, than you have any conception of, more than I told you of before. But I know and feel it, and bless God for it. Beside the direct influence upon my own character, I have been collaterally and most importantly benefited by the communication of your sentiments as to a variety of persons and things, even where I have not come exactly to the same conclusions as you have. I have been taught not to act on the judgment of others, speaking generally, but to seek by their light, and by all means, to get a right judgment of my own, and then to act from principle and conviction, not from idleness and complaisance."

Mrs. Gibson unquestionably owed much to a vigorous tone of mind, and to the possession of

important natural gifts. But to imagine that the secret of her attainments lay here would be to deter others who have, or imagine they have, much lower qualifications, from that improvement of two talents which shall "gain other two." The not aiming at a high standard of attainment and of excellence, is that which beyond any other cause depresses young persons especially to the level of mediocrity.

But the subject of this memoir was never content with mediocrity ; and she owed much to this resolution to excel. Subtract the advantages she received from the excellent judgment of her mother, and her superiority as a woman is the natural result of her own diligence, discipline, and efforts. "As it is in the body, so it is in the mind, practice makes it what it is ; and most even of those excellencies which are looked upon as natural endowments, will be found, when examined into more narrowly, to be the product of exercise, and to be raised to that pitch only by repeated actions." Even early in life, Mrs. Gibson observed, "The more I see of the world, the more I see of the ignorance that is in it through a want of diligent application ; and the more I value that desire after knowledge, and that ability to enjoy and appreciate it, even in my poor degree, that is given to me."

In the cultivation of her mind, Mrs. Gibson thought no pains, or efforts, or sacrifices, too great. While the necessity more especially existed, she rose early, was fully occupied during the day, and sat up late at night, in order to find sufficient time ; for she knew that nothing worth possessing is attained without vigorous effort. The remarks of Mr. Fenwick, an early friend of Mrs. Gibson, and one well qualified to judge of her intellectual character, are very just :—

“WHILE I had the happiness of knowing, that religion was the chief concern of my departed friend, I knew also that polite literature and science were subordinated to it. Many literary persons may have read a greater number of books than Mrs. Gibson; but she was not one who could be satisfied with gliding over the page, and culling a sentiment here and there; she sifted every work she took in hand; she tested every principle; she examined every argument; and was in every respect what our good puritan ancestors would have called ‘a painful student.’ What she read, she read well; and by exercises of this kind she obtained that clear and lucid mode of stating subjects, and that facility in applying knowledge, for which she was so eminently distinguished. Our beloved friend did not limit her Christianity to speculative theology. She knew that every doctrine of grace was according to godliness; and every principle of faith, a principle of righteousness. Her light shone not under a bushel, but, like a Pharos, she illuminated all around her.”

Mrs. Gibson does not appear to have cultivated any “accomplishments,” as they are termed, with the exception of music, which she early abandoned. I am not able to speak of her proficiency herein; but I observed that she had more taste and judgment in literature than the arts, and better understood philosophy than science.

She took every opportunity of strongly recommending young persons to acquire general information, and to push inquiry and observation into every subject, not confining themselves to what is strictly religious. Her own habits were a manifest illustration of her advice; and she never even passed through a street

without learning from the placarded walls what was passing in the very active, bustling town of which she was an interested citizen. But she was also a "citizen of the world;" and, feeling a lively interest in the welfare of the whole human race, regarded with attention the political events of foreign nations as well as those of her own beloved country.

Mrs. Gibson possessed excellent conversational powers; her copious and exact information being ever ready at hand, and her felicity of expression, and liveliness and suavity of manners, making it the advantage and delight of her friends to listen to her. She never sacrificed truth, nor took an unfair advantage of another; and even her silence often promoted conversation in others; for it was not the silence of doubt, or of ignorance, but of animated intelligence.

Mrs. Gibson's natural temper was sweet and amiable; accompanied, however, with a quickness of sensibility which, on some occasions, might amount to irritability, or rather, perhaps, to impatience. Yet this was more lamented by herself, than generally observed by others; and certainly was not the prevailing character of her mind; partly that grace had corrected her habitual temper, and partly that a better knowledge of herself had increased her humility. The superiority of her mind and attainments exposed her to the temptation to think more highly of herself than she ought to think. But she soon learned that holiness is the true beauty, and that her attainments were nothing in comparison with what she had not attained.

She had great calmness and decision; a decision and firmness in little things, wherein most persons chiefly fail, only because they are little, forgetting

that habits are formed by repetition, and that nothing so well prepares us for the firmness required on trying occasions, as habitual self-denial.

In forming friendships, she was seldom impressed at once; her deliberation and habitual caution forbade it. Her acquaintance was extensive; her friends few; but towards them she indeed showed herself friendly. She was not satisfied with the ordinary standard of friendship,—the mere reciprocation of the civilities of life; but looked upon it as the interchange of thought and affection; the candid scrutiny, the vigilant oversight, the faithful reproof of love. That faithfulness which kills the blossoms of ordinary friendships was the life and comfort of hers; and so far from being studiously avoided, as if by mutual consent, was studiously cultivated as its principal end. There are among the innermost circle of her friends, who know the truth of this remark; and will thankfully acknowledge their obligations to her love. She was eminently qualified for counsel; and at once entering upon the case, and placing her own feelings in abeyance, she would divest the subject of those prejudices which the feelings or interests of her friend had thrown around it, and at once bring out the line of conduct which ought to be pursued. But, unlike those who are perfect philosophers in advising others where themselves are not personally concerned, she was not indifferent to the feelings of others, but would weep while directing them to deny inclination, and to forego the pleasures of taste and feeling at the demand of duty. It was a cup of which she had deeply drunk, and therefore she could so fully sympathize with others. She once observed in reference to the effect of a mysterious and great affliction, “Whilst watching the effects of the discipline of the

Lord on Christian friends, I sometimes think I have a fellow-feeling with the apostle, when he said, 'Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.'"

"I have experienced her friendship," observes Mrs. A——, who had been intimate with her from childhood, "and, as a friend, she was affectionate, faithful, sincere, and confiding. Her attachments were steady; not readily cooled by absence, or wounded by a jealous feeling. And she was ever desirous of promoting the best interests of her friends to the greatest possible extent, both for this world and the next."

There was a great depth and tenderness in her affections, and she was remarkably faithful. Her love of her relatives was indeed the love of woman. Her consideration, her willingness to resign her own enjoyment, her faithfulness, her ardent desires for their salvation, were manifest in her whole conduct, and gave a signal impress to all her correspondence with them.

As a wife, Mrs. Gibson was eminently "a help meet" for her husband. There is no man that does not see evil under the sun; but, instead of increasing any burden, or aggravating any trouble, she was ever ready to afford aid by the counsel, comfort, and encouragement which she was so eminently qualified to impart; and by her constantly sweet and cheerful temper, even while sharing in distress, she dissipated gloom and banished discontent. She was ever watchful to anticipate the wishes of her husband; promptly yielding her will, and ready to resign her own convenience, to add to his enjoyment. And "the heart of her husband did safely trust in her."

As a mother, she was not distinguished for that fondness which too many consider to be the greatest display of affection; but hers was the true love, for

she was wise, self-denying, and firm ; and loved her children's welfare more than their persons. But we shall recur to this subject.

No earthly blessing could be comparable to that of possessing such a sister ; one whose counsels were wise, whose example was a living testimony to the power and blessedness of religion, and whose love was as fervent as it was constant.

As a mistress, she was gentle and considerate, though decisive and firm. She governed without oppressing, and maintained discipline without severity ; her servants generally remained long in her service, and became possessed of the blessings of religion.

In noticing Mrs. Gibson's religious character, it is important to observe how well she laid the foundations of her conviction of the truth of Christianity. She early examined its evidences ; and the reading of every week served to augment those proofs, and afresh to rivet her convictions that the Gospel is "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance."

She was conversant with all our best writers on the general evidences of Christianity ; and had great pleasure in those branches of the argument which are derived from the undesigned coincidences of the several parts of the sacred volume, and the unintentional testimonies of various travellers. But the argument from prophecy, as the standing and cumulative evidence on behalf of revelation,—the perpetual miracle of wisdom, which appeals to the reason of him who would be wise, was a species of proof which best suited her intellectual taste ; and in it she greatly delighted. She felt that she was here made mentally conversant with supernatural things, and the primary present demonstrations of the inspi-

ration and authority of Scripture. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Mrs. Gibson was distinguished for a profound deference to the authority of the word of God. Her only anxiety was to discover its meaning; and to this end, she was a diligent and habitual reader, nay, student, of its pages; reading them as a pupil who had every thing to learn, and would find there all knowledge necessary to salvation. Her reason knew no office in the study of the Bible, but to interpret according to the analogy of faith, comparing spiritual things with spiritual; and herein she sought that teaching of the Spirit which is secured by the promise of Christ to any man who will be a doer of His will. Once satisfied of the meaning of these "true sayings of God," her mind was fixed; that which terminated all her reasonings and attempts at discovery in sacred things, ended all her doubts; and proved the repose of her intellect, as well as the confidence of her heart.

In the early part of her religious career, Mrs. Gibson was retired and contemplative, and chiefly studied the most stringent religious writers, and the most severe examples of holiness. Her great business then was with the depth and security of her foundations, the certainty of her first principles, and the accurate laying of each successive stone. She improved the season of first ardour and sincerity, when a high standard of religion is desired rather than objected to, in order to study Christianity in its full dimensions and just proportions; and she was therefore led to study it in the original draft of the New Testament, in the writings of the purest ages of the Church, and in the experience of its brightest luminaries. She found depth of piety was more certainly secured by this comparative seclusion, and

the study of individual Christianity ; but although she escaped the mysticism which too generally results from such a course, she was in some danger of a monastic piety. At one time she certainly mingled too little with religious people, especially the members of her own church. She was, at the time to which I allude, disposed to narrow the circle of her intimacy as much as possible ; partly from a morbid sensibility in reference to offences, partly because she saw the evils of a contrary extreme, and partly under the notion of securing herself against what she deemed uncalled-for trials of grace. She coveted the shelter of the green-house, and forgot how conducive the free play of winds and sun-light are to healthful and vigorous growth. But this error, I understand, was fully corrected during the last few years of her life ; and whenever she found herself freed from the more pressing of her domestic duties, she willingly and zealously engaged in assisting the various religious and benevolent institutions of the town ; and more sedulously cultivated the social virtues of religion.

Mrs. Gibson's religion was strictly and highly evangelical. There was a time when she had not such a sense of the demerit of sin, nor such a deep conviction of the evil of her own heart, as to see the necessity of an infinitely precious atonement to enable her to draw nigh to God, find acceptance for her duties, or obtain an answer to her prayers. After she had been brought to that repentance which is the acknowledgment of the truth, she saw the necessity of faith in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and, from that time, her only repose was in the satisfaction of His death. Neither her attainments, nor her labours, nor her intellectual pursuits, ever drew her off from the simplicity of her dependence upon

Christ. On the contrary, her convictions deepened through the whole course of her religious career, as to the utter worthlessness of all her doings, and their need of sprinkled blood to render any of them acceptable to God ; and in reference to her absolute dependence upon the Spirit of Christ, for will and power to do any thing “as God hath willed and commanded it to be done.” She fetched her motives, her strength, and her hopes, from the cross :—that was her centre of attraction ; and around it, in all evangelical duties, she was not only content, but rejoiced to fulfil her course. These evangelical principles characterized her piety ; which was distinguished, not by its circumstantialia, nor by its noise and bustle, nor even by its intelligence, so much as its simplicity, purity, and fervour. Her one commanding reason, in all things, was her Lord’s precept ;—her single end was her Lord’s glory.

Her piety was fervent ; but hers was fervour of a high character. It was not occasional, but habitual ; not evanescent, but abiding ; not constitutional temperament, but the result of grace. It was not the fitful glare of lightning which plunges into deeper darkness ; but the calm and steady light of day ;—not the paroxysm of fever which bestows for the time preternatural strength, but leaves the patient powerless ; but it was the genial glow of health, capable of enduring the ordinary weather, and constant duties of life. It had in it more of sentiment than emotion, —more of principle than of passion. Its flame was not extinguished, but sustained, by consideration ; her light was neither put under a bushel, nor immured in a cloister, nor needlessly exposed to adverse winds, —but placed where it might give light to all in the house.

The strength of her religious affections was evinced in her devotions, and especially her prayers on behalf of those who had gone, or were in danger of going astray. With her, devotion consisted not in the beauty of the sentiment, but in the strength of desire ; and praise was not valued for its poetry, but for its joyful heart. The tenderness and importunity of her prayers for others could only be known to a few ; but there are who can tell of the tears which would flow freely when interceding with God, and of the holy passion with which she poured out her heart, ready, like the apostle, to wish herself accursed from Christ for her brethren, her kinsmen according to the flesh. :

But fervour was chastened with reverence. Her freedom in devotion was a filial freedom ; and was never intermingled with those expressions which savour too strongly of familiarity to be compatible with reverence. Things sacred were treated sacredly ; and the reason of her hope was always given with meekness and fear. For the same reason she always expressed her preference of the masculine devotion of the hymns of her own people, to those productions which, although devout in their strain, are exceedingly amatory in their style.

But that which incurred her highest displeasure, or rather, occasioned her greatest grief, as, in her solemn conviction, most offensive in the sight of God, was that any one professing to be a minister of Christ, and an imitator of St. Paul, should ever so far forget himself as to makethetemple of God a place of religious amusement ; employ pantomime, and cultivate eccentricity to produce effect, and “ court a grin where he should woo a soul.” I have heard and seen her grief that ever the precious Gospel should be made to furnish materials for comic wit, or the pulpit become

the theatre on which a "legate of the skies" should win for himself the basest notoriety at the expense of his Master and His cause. If once the taste of a people be more gratified by the eccentricities of the Preacher, than delighted with the great and joyful truths of his message, excitement is not only profitless, but, like every other species of intoxication, it will vitiate their appetite for what is plain and solid; create a necessity for more powerful stimulus; rob them of moral energy for ordinary duty; and lead them to mistake the lust of curiosity for love of the word, and the excitement of passion for the strength of principle, and the fervour of devotion.

I am happy to find these views of Mrs. Gibson's religious character confirmed by so competent a judge as the Rev. James Everett, who kindly allows me to use the following extract:—

"HER piety, for solidity and transparency, partook of the character of her mind. It was noiseless, and yet active. It had all the calm, and yet all the subdued warmth of a summer evening, for the tranquillity of which we sigh after the bustle, and the shade of which we court after the intense heat, of the day. It was emphatically the religion of enjoyment; or still more appropriately, as to its internal character,—piety at rest, the sabbath home of the heart;—a repose of soul resembling the sweet and unruffled slumber of the least of the five lovely children she has left behind, when a smile is settling down upon its infant features.

"In her movements there was neither earnestness nor indifference; but a steady, cheerful concern, without any thing like anxiety; always displaying the meekness of wisdom, the tenderness of love, and

the gentleness of Him who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me.' "

Her religion was eminently self-denying and practical. If she was convinced of duty, it was to her sufficient reason and motive for performing it at any cost to her own inclinations. We have seen, indeed, how early and effectually she was disciplined to this; and how devoutly she acknowledged the wisdom and mercy of those dispensations of her early Christian career, the design of which she did not then comprehend. She knew that self-denial and taking up the cross, is the first and last lesson in the school of Christ. Her morality was that of the Gospel in all its duties. She did not merely hold it as an article of her creed,—that good works are the fruit of faith; but she lived up to her creed, and was thus justified by the evidence of her works. Thus "faith wrought with her works; and by works was her faith made perfect." She firmly embraced that condemning sentence, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin;" and that great doctrinal truth, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Her self-denial was shown in the appropriation of her time. She would not allow herself in what are called "recreations." Her arrangements left her no leisure for visits of mere ceremony, or unprofitable engagements. If she allowed herself occasional intercourse with select friends, it was to receive and impart some good, intellectual or religious. She was formed rather for happiness than pleasure; and the spirit of a living sacrifice to God was the chief element of her enjoyment.

She was equally careful in the use of the talent of

money. I think, nay, I am sure, I never knew one who so readily denied herself of the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Herein nature perhaps favoured principle, and made the sacrifice less difficult in her case, than in many others. But she aimed at her own moral advantage, seeing it was an important triumph over self, and a part of the mortification which she had vowed to Christ, she would reach after; for an example to others, and that she might have to give to him that needed. Instead therefore of indulging the lust of possession, a passion which, literally, knows not to be satisfied, she reserved the money which others spend in expensive curiosities and unique trifles, for God's heritage,—the poor.

The difficulties attending the faithful and conscientious outlay of a large income are a greater source of temptation and disquiet than any inexperienced person can imagine. "This is a gracious evidence indeed," she observes to a friend, "if when riches increase we do not set our hearts upon them. I am sure you feel the right application of your substance to be in itself a care and a concern beyond what many who have never been tried with that sort of responsibility, have any conception of. May the Lord make you wise and faithful stewards! The reward will doubtless be proportioned to the difficulty and danger attendant on the service." One of Mrs. Gibson's earliest friends observes, that she did not perceive that change in her which is usually wrought even in Christians by an increase of the means of worldly comfort; for she never desired great things for herself, but made the cause of God the first, and not the last, to receive the advantage of that worldly prosperity. Neither did she assume any unbecoming carriage towards her old friends, but

was the same simple, humble-minded Christian as formerly.

The exertions which Mrs. Gibson made during her whole life on behalf of the general welfare of her fellow-creatures, and especially for their eternal interests, form the best illustration of her religion, and the fittest monument to her memory. Her zeal was not an individual virtue, but the life and ornament of every other. It gave decision and energy, and diffused grace and loveliness through her whole conduct. Few females have more extensively diffused the savour of the knowledge of Christ. Her great influence in those public institutions where the sex have their own peculiar walk of usefulness, her extensive correspondence, and her ceaseless but noiseless activity, characterize her whole life as "an essay to do good."

Her earliest labours were in the Sunday-schools connected with her own parish church; and I have before me several letters of thanks on behalf of the respective committees, for the labours she bestowed upon those Institutions. She early became an active Collector for the Bible Society, and sustained the office of Secretary to the Ladies' Branch Society. She also collected subscriptions for the Society for the Conversion of the Jews.

During her short residence in London she was a Visitor in the Guardian Asylum, and took an efficient interest in the Strangers' Friend Society. On her return to Newcastle, she was successively appointed to the offices of Treasurer and Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and the Newcastle Reformation Society. She was a faithful labourer in the Clothing Society; and her sound and practical judgment in the difficult and painful cases which

often occurred in the Female Penitentiary, afforded to that important Institution the most valuable counsel and aid. She warmly espoused the Temperance Societies, as originally constructed; and, especially by the distribution of tracts, &c. contributed not a little to the information of the public mind.

Beside the above more public engagements, she attended upon the duties of a Class-Leader; and was not only ready to afford those occasional services, which, in a philanthropic town, and in connexion with so active a portion of the church, must ever and anon be required; but with her own hands she afforded relief to no small number of the poor; and by her counsel and her prayers directed and comforted many. It might be expected that such a woman would look for great effects to be produced by the circulation of books, and by inducing people to read; and her indefatigable labours in this department of usefulness are beyond all praise. She occasionally employed the press in re-printing a tract; the last, I believe, was a sermon of Mr. Hall's, "On the Nature and Danger of evil Communications."

Her religion was truly benevolent. "I have heard it regretted," says Mrs. More, "that ladies have no stated employment—no profession. This is a mistake; charity is the calling of a lady; the care of the poor is her profession." Mrs. Gibson's tenderness of heart would have prompted her to this, if she had not had religion. But her benevolence was more than the gushings of natural feeling; it was vital with evangelical principle. That cardinal doctrine of the Gospel, the heart and soul of Christianity—the vicarious sufferings of Christ,—realized

as it was to her own soul's comfort, raised the feelings of humanity into an integral part of religion ; and because she loved God, she loved her brother also.

Her beneficence was widely extended in proportion to her means. What was deficient in the splendour of an annual oblation, was more than made up in the amount of the daily sacrifice ; and love "bound the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar." Her charities were economized by her general system, of which indeed they formed a part. It was thus that she left something ready for cases of emergency ; and thus she kept up the healthful action of the principle of benevolence, and enjoyed the perpetual luxury of doing good.

In affording whatever pecuniary help she could spare, to the various Institutions of Newcastle, it was her rule, not only to consider their nature, and the importance of their objects, but their resources. "What little I have to give," she would say, "I must give to those Institutions which few of the rich patronize."

But Mrs. Gibson's peculiar care was the poor of Christ's flock, and that with reference to their distress and necessity, and not to their creed. It was a settled point with her, that the greatest service to the poor is to teach them to help themselves. This was a maxim which she adopted when but a girl ; and one of her first efforts in this way was to establish a sort of savings' bank, and teach them the value and use of money. But so far from making this a pretence to evade occasions of giving, she sought out objects of charity ; and where their number or necessities exceeded her own means, she was not ashamed to beg in her turn ; but rejoiced that

she had influence enough to open other channels when her own resources had run dry. Considerable sums of money were often thus placed at her disposal; for her efforts and influence extended far beyond what those unacquainted with the facts would suppose. Nor is there any room to suspect the motives of such beneficence; for it is not chiefly in "Annual Reports" that we are to find the records of her doings; but in the retreat of the widow, and in the garret and cellar

"Where lonely want retires to die."

Hers was a home charity, and affected concealment rather than publicity. None better knew, that "the iniquity of our holy things requires much Christian vigilance. Next to not giving at all, the greatest fault is to give from ostentation. The contest is only between two sins; and the good work that is paid in praise, is stripped of the hope of higher retribution."

I ought to add, that her benevolence was characterized by great sweetness of temper, and the softest sympathy. She first "purposed in her heart," and then gave, "not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Her sentiments on this subject are beautifully stated in the following extract from a note to a friend:—

"CALLS upon me for the poor in mind, body, or estate, are always so pressing, that I seldom have much liberty to choose my employment. But I am so happy when I have but a hope that I am usefully engaged, and so thankful that the Lord always finds me enough of employment just suited to the little

ability He gives me, that I can only say, 'Lord, what am I that Thou shouldst thus favour me, that I should be able to offer so willingly; for all things come of Thee?' And truly, my dear friend, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' This only posthumous record of our gracious Lord's words, breathes His Godlike spirit; and, were it not recorded by an inspired penman, would approve itself as the genuine sentiment of Him, the streams of whose bounty reach to all, and 'who gave Himself for us.' Well may we exclaim, 'Herein is love!'

Mr. Fenwick observes: "She loved to cherish rising talent, and to afford assistance to those whose stations in civil society precluded them the benefit of those advantages which the more favoured children of intellect enjoyed. Many were her applications to me in matters of this character; and I have a melancholy pleasure in recollecting instances in which I was enabled to facilitate her benevolent intentions."

Mrs. Gibson was a decided, honest, and firm Methodist. She loved the doctrines of Methodism, because she believed them to be those of the Bible; she loved its ministers, because she believed them to be called and sanctioned of Christ; and she loved its discipline, because she believed it to be according to godliness, and promotive of the prosperity and peace of the societies. To an intimate friend, she observed: "O my dear C——, what manner of Christians ought we Methodists to be, who have such light, such examples, and such opportunities! Every day of my life I see more reason to bless God for having brought me into this part of His church."

The public and private means of grace she ever found to be wells of salvation. Those meetings for Christian fellowship, called class-meetings—the im-

portance and necessity of which most churches now feel, and are ready to acknowledge—she highly prized. She met with two friends once a week in band, and on the Sabbath-day was joined by a dear relative in these more unrestricted meetings for mutual sympathy, counsel, and prayer; and when opportunity allowed, she gladly joined the people of God in the public bands and prayer-meetings. Her regard to the discipline of the body with whom she united herself, was exemplary; and was founded on principle. She gave honour to whom honour was due, and submitted to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. She knew too well, that insubordination was the insinuating root of mischief which was penetrating the church as well as civil society, and threatening to loosen the very frame-work of both, and to dislodge the stones of their strongest masonry. She also well considered that, when admitted to share the advantages of such a Christian society, she voluntarily resigned some portion of her own liberty,—her mere will and convenience,—and tacitly agreed to abstain from vexatious opposition, or careless disregard, of the known rules and usages of the society, even in so small a matter as showing her ticket when required. She thus maintained the principle, and set an example which served as a protest against the superciliousness of those who “despise little things,” in matters of church-order.

Her regard for the ministers of Christ was for their office' sake; for although she delighted in pulpit talent, yet could she respect the minister more than she admired the man, and, whatever his talents, esteem the man for his work's sake. In the last letter I had the pleasure of receiving from her, almost the last she wrote, she says, “I trust that late events will be over-ruled in many ways for our edification as

a church. Our ministers have long kept silence on our duty to them in many points, the effects of which they now feel. They must be faithful in speaking, 'whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear.'

Her religion was eminently catholic and liberal. Her having to leave the church where she had worshipped from infancy, and her being led to form a union with a body of people whom she once lightly esteemed, early taught her candour in judging; and her acquaintance with so many pious persons of different denominations, convinced her that there was a creed which all held in common; and that it must include the true fundamentals of Christianity, because of its saving power through the influence of the Holy Ghost. She was, through life, constantly associating with members of other churches; and indeed was an important link in that chain by which her own section, in the town where she resided, was connected with the other parts of the church of God. She had a great veneration for consistent Christians, especially where eminent piety was combined with sound discretion. She numbered amongst her friends many ornaments of the Establishment, and of the Dissenting churches, the excellent of the earth. Educated as Mrs. Gibson was, in the bosom of the Establishment, she could never cease to feel towards that church the most hearty good-will. But as she had received such great spiritual advantages from her union with the Methodists, she ever gave the most honest and decided preference to that body of Christians. Her love to Methodism was not fettered with lingerings of affection after the Established Church; nor her expression of approbation of the Establishment, clogged with secret alienation, or suspicious reserves. She "added" "to brotherly kindness, charity."

Once more I avail myself of the testimony of Mr. Fenwick :—" But while Mrs. Gibson was evidently attached to the denomination on which her character shed a lustre, she was not sectarian. She gave the right hand of fellowship to all who held the Head. Though she followed not with me, yet our differences never altered our friendship; and when we met, it was not to descant on those points on which we were divided; but on those in which we were agreed, and to strengthen each other in the faith delivered to the saints. She wished to act up to Philip Melancthon's rule :—

‘ Unity in things essential,
Forbearance in things indifferent,
Charity in all.’ ”

But that in which her example will be most useful, and which indeed forms its highest praise, is the *domestic character* of her religion. In nothing is her conduct more impressive than in this respect; and perhaps in none is her example more needed. Neither the pleasures of literature and of taste, nor the superiority of her mind, nor the amount of public business which generally lay upon her hands, nor the bustle of out-of-door religion, nor even the opportunity she had, by purchased services, to transfer many domestic and maternal duties to others,—ever led to the neglect of the unobserved and unexciting occupations of her own home. She left them with reluctance, and returned to them with joy. After the care of her own soul, she believed her family demanded her chief regard; and she found the systematic and right performance of those duties, exercise enough for every Christian principle and grace. She deeply deplored the too-general neglect of those duties; and since the family is the nursery of morals, and the first school of Christianity, she was

exceedingly anxious to witness a reform in these respects throughout the church.

Indeed, until education, family education, shall have been set to a higher standard, the hopes of the church, in reference to the coming generation of men, must continue to be low. It is in vain to conceal the fact, and it were sinful too, that education is not regarded even by Christians, as it once was, as that *perpetual means of grace* by which not only character is to be formed, but the first seeds of piety are to be sown. That word is, or is not, one of the true sayings of God: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." In other instances, failure of success where God appears to have promised it, is attributed to some vicious neglect, or some wilful oversight, and not to the Divine unfaithfulness in withholding the promised influence; and why should we allow ourselves to plead against God as if His promise had failed in this case? The truth is, there are few instances of the children of the pious becoming an ungodly seed, but more than one glaring defect or evil might be pointed out, sufficient to vitiate our claim to the promise, and to neutralize the effect of many fervent prayers, offered as a cheap substitute for our own self-denial and personal care. "Whensoever God shall restore religion in the world," says the great and good John Howe, "and make it again to prosper, and more to prosper, as we hope He will, it will be by this means, in very great part. Much will be done towards it, when it shall please God to stir up the hearts of those who are governors of families, parents and masters, and to set them with effect on their duty in these things; when they shall be brought more to tender the precious immortal souls

under their care, and be filled with a more just zeal against the growing debauchery of the world."

But the right Christian education of a family involves a constant vigilance, the nicest circumspection, vigorous principle, systematic labours ;—in a word, Christian consistency. If we are Christians indeed, nowhere will be more readily discerned, and nowhere will it shed a milder lustre, or a more fruitful influence, than in the bosom of our own family. And it is in vain that we bear that character any where else, if it be not both seen and felt at home.

The writer here adverts to this all-important subject, because he would seize every opportunity to urge it upon the attention of Christians ; and because he is able to enforce and illustrate these observations by the opinions and example of one, who had considerable experience and large observation. To his mind, none of the excellencies of Mrs. Gibson's character are more important or useful, than her regard to her family ; and all are welcome to pluck every leaf from her laurels, if they will only imitate her in this, THAT IN HER FAMILY SHE ACTED AS BECAME AN EXEMPLARY, INTELLIGENT, CHRISTIAN WOMAN. His fear is, lest mothers should wilfully place that example above their imitation, by *attributing to her talents what was effected by principle and system*. I knew her mind and habits as fully upon these points as any ; and know that she was deeply convinced of her own imperfections and defects ; but that if she had any merit, it was an earnest desire to do right, and a humble wish to learn and to amend.

Mrs. Gibson's system of domestic government and instruction was not so much marked by rigid rules and nice observances, as regulated by principle, and carried out by the vigilance of her love, the wisdom of her religion, and the sense of her responsibility.

Her authority and command was complete and absolute; but it was more felt than seen. The prevailing character of it was her moral and religious care of her household; for in the matter of instruction she incorporated her servants with her children. "You inquire whether I attend chapel regularly. I am thankful to be able to say, I do. Only one person remains at home at a time on Sundays. I go out morning and evening; the servants alternately twice one Sunday, and once the next. I devote an hour of the afternoon to the religious instruction of the servant that is in, and we attend to the children at the same time. O that the Lord may give His blessing, and enable me, like Abraham, to command my children and my household after me, 'that they may keep the way of the Lord.'" "O, my dear friend, I feel it to be a great work to train up children, and one requiring constant attention. The depravity of their nature is forcibly obtruding itself upon one's notice at every turn. 'Who is sufficient for these things?' would lead to despair, could we not reply, 'Our sufficiency is of God.' I see this to be the main business of my life at present. Lord, help me to perform it aright. I want more patience, both with myself and them. I find the duty a profitable one, inasmuch as it leads to watchfulness over one's own conduct, being ever under the eye of such inspectors. To 'abstain from all appearance of evil,' as well as from evil itself, is ever pressing upon one. Whilst giving my little boy some instruction on Sunday out of the Conference Catechism, our evil hearts were the subject, of which love of the world was stated to be one proof. 'Are you a lover of the world, mamma?' was the searching question put by my pupil, who became catechist in his turn."

Mrs. Gibson's plan was early to commence a course

of discipline. The crying of children she used playfully to call "a capital crime;" and to prevent the habit, whatever they wished for, if it was proper for them, she required that it should be given them immediately, before impatience was produced, or crying had begun. This, of course, was a privilege of the infant only. As soon as he could be made to understand, he was taught to wait until a convenient season for the gratification of his wishes. The subjection of the will, and implicit, unhesitating obedience to every command, small as well as great, was one of the earliest lessons taught to her children. She ever thought it important to make those commands as few in number as possible; but they were not allowed to judge of the command, or to dispute the authority. She made this her first object, not only as the true basis of her own domestic government and peace, but as the only way of happiness to her children, and as the most effectual preparation for the yoke of Christ.

For the following notices, I am indebted to her sister:—

"SHE inculcated and enforced habits of order and punctuality; of civility and kindness to servants; compassion for the poor and destitute; undeviating truth; and reverence for the name, the book, and the house of God. I never knew a person more averse to give pain, yet, when it was necessary, she did not shrink from the duty of correction; but so successful was her treatment, that corporal punishment was rarely needed, although there were five children in the same house, under the age of eight years. In her administration both of reward and punishment, her children were so convinced of her impartiality, that even the youngest knew that its conduct would

not fail to meet with its desert. She cultivated with much care, reciprocal affection and kindness among her children ; avoiding and repressing every thing likely to excite jealousy, and promoting whatever tended to give play to the finest feelings of their nature. She prayed with her children individually ; and was ever imparting to them instruction of the best kind, in the most attractive form."

"O my dear friend," says Mrs. Gibson, a year or two before her death, "I feel that, as a people, we are not sufficiently in earnest with God for our children ! Lord, help us to be more faithful ! I see a great danger of our allowing in them things we should not allow in ourselves. O for wisdom and grace ! In this thing I feel that I ought to be exemplary, and, by the help of God, I intend to be so. And you, my dear C——, who dwell in a region above the mists which earthly and inordinate affection involves us parents in, must be faithful to us when you see what we do not see. For myself, I do humbly promise that nothing you say on this point shall ever offend me. Let this bear witness against me if ever I should."

I have great pleasure in appending a sketch of the character of Mrs. Gibson from the pen of the Rev. Isaac Keeling, who knew her intimately during the last eighteen months of her life ; and whose testimony in the present sketch, will prove a voucher for mine. .

"THOUGH I was often favoured with the conversation of the late excellent Mrs. Gibson, both in her cheerful health, and her lingering decay, I have perceived, with regret, whenever I have endeavoured to recover any portion of her intelligent and interesting obser-

vations, that my recollections are too vague and general to be stated in a narrative form.

"After a few opportunities of observing Mrs. Gibson, I saw, what was indeed obvious, that her natural and acquired endowments were various and eminent.

"My attention was first attracted by the quietness and gentleness, with which Mrs. Gibson effectually occupied a considerable and influential part, both in the meetings of religious and benevolent institutions, and in varied social intercourse. Whatever she did or said, on occasions of either sort, was not so much marked, as pervaded, with order, clearness, and ease. Whether it was a gift of nature or an acquirement, or whether it was the effect of an ever-present sense of feminine propriety, I am unable to determine; but the fact I soon perceived, that, on most subjects, she had decided views and sentiments, without a decided manner. She appeared often to be seeking information, or at most, feeling the way towards results, when, in reality, she was leading or sustaining the conversation; or imperceptibly guiding deliberations while she seemed to be chiefly listening and inquiring.

"She appeared to me, on all occasions, to have perfect presence of mind; with an habitual facility of dealing with practical details, in a manner which was at once expeditious and correct.

"With all this tact and readiness in affairs, which was evident on a superficial acquaintance, further opportunities would enable a thoughtful observer to discover—that she was well-informed on every subject to which the course of conversation might be turned; and that there were some branches of knowledge which she had studied with deep interest and persevering investigation.

"She had an aptitude, beyond most persons in

whom piety and intelligence are united, for gracefully introducing religious conversation. But the impression of her mental superiority was so strong and general, that I have had occasion to discover that, amongst her own sex, it was in some instances the real cause of some ambiguous symptoms of dislike; and that religious men, of cultivated minds, felt a difficulty in conducting a class-meeting, or engaging in prayer, in her presence.

"I have stated, elsewhere, that in Mrs. Gibson, there appeared a remarkable combination of excellencies which generally flourish apart. As it is not unusual to ascribe to departed friends such a set of balanced and contrasted qualities, as seldom co-exist but in words, it may not be quite superfluous to state—that I expressed my deliberate conviction, when I wrote, in a communication to the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, that Mrs. Gibson had great natural capacity, cultivated by a liberal education; ready practical talent, with feminine sensibility and propriety; and the sacred knowledge of a divine, with the spirit and practice of a 'meek, simple, follower of the Lamb.'

"The last time I renewed the tickets of her class, she alluded to observations I had sometimes made in her presence, by mentioning the comfort she derived, from an increased sense of the absolute truth of revealed religion.

"When she last attended at our chapel in Westgate-street, (about half a mile distant from her usual place of worship,) it was to hear a sermon she had requested me to preach on, 'Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' 1 John v. 4. She afterwards desired to see the outline of the discourse; and one of the last expressions I heard from her, concerning her Christian experience,

was, (in allusion to the above text,) ‘ I am trying to get the victory.’

“ It has been an unspeakable satisfaction to me that, as I learned from her frequent testimony, I was enabled to minister to the edification and comfort of such a mind. I speak advisedly, in saying that, in several points of cultivated excellence, I have not known her equal.”

IN conclusion : The preceding Memoirs are fraught with instruction to young persons. Let them emulate such an example, in a diligent improvement of every opportunity to acquire the most valuable knowledge, not fearing difficulties which application and perseverance will assuredly overcome ; in reverent affection to their parents ; and in doing good after their power.

Let Christians, and especially young Christians, learn to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Let them remember that they are stewards, and that a strong desire to be found faithful, will suggest innumerable methods of employing themselves for God ; so that no paucity of talent, or peculiarity of circumstances, need prevent the gain of doing good. The measure of our capacity is the measure of our obligation ; and our good Lord does not reap where He has not sown. “ She hath done what she could,” is commendation high enough for mortals.

But especially let mothers remember, that it is not talent, but influence, which moulds the character :—influence, silent and unobserved as the evening dew, seen only in the morning freshness of the tender herb ;—vital, as the light of the early sun when he rises upon a sterile and cheerless world ;—beautiful and blessed, as the sweet home it cheers, and in which it creates “ an atmosphere of the affections.”

No mother can be without influence ; for it begins

when her infant lies cradled at the fount of life ; and may without difficulty, nay, with ease, be increased to almost any amount. It is hers to bend the oak while yet a twig ; to train the vine while yet its branches are tender. Whose kiss made West a painter ? Whose instruction in Scripture-history made Doddridge acquainted with the Old and New Testaments by the time he was four years old ? Whose image of loveliness attended Cowper during the whole of those years of mysterious darkness, in which his fine soul wandered through the dark chambers of his prison-house, longing for the light of day ? Whose example of meek and humble piety in affliction rested as a drag upon the wheel of a fierce charioteer, and compelled the daring mind of a Cecil to pause in vice ? Whose rational and consistent discipline formed the mind of Wesley to sustain "the pelting scorn of half an age," while rousing a nation out of its moral torpor ?

Not to mention Hall, and Herbert, and Halyburton, and the Henrys, and Swartz, and Brainerd, all acknowledging how deeply they were indebted to the instructions and tenderness, the piety and prayers of their mothers,—how seldom have we eminent, without early, piety ; and how seldom early piety without the special influence of a pious mother ! Only let mothers commence early ; and never suppose that the excessive efforts of a short season, are to supply the neglects of a long period. If the seed time of the early spring be neglected, and we hope to recover the advantage in the glowing summer, a sickly and unprofitable autumn will only yield us bitter weeds instead of golden fruit.

" If we are responsible for the use of influence in the case of those over whom we have no immediate

control, in the case of our children we are responsible for the exercise of acknowledged power : a power wide in its extent, indefinite in its effects, and inestimable in its importance. On you depend, in no small degree, the principles of the whole rising generation. To your direction the daughters are almost exclusively committed ; and until a certain age, to you also is consigned the mighty privilege of forming the hearts and minds of your infant sons. To you is made over the awfully important trust of infusing the first principles of piety into the minds of those who may be called one day to instruct, not families merely, but districts ; to influence, not individuals, but senates. Your private exertions may at this moment be contributing to the future happiness, your neglect to the future ruin, of your country. And may you never forget in this your early instruction of your offspring, nor they, in their future application of it, that religion is the only sure ground of morals ; that private principle is the only solid basis of public virtue. O think that they both may be fixed or forfeited for ever, according to the use you are now making of that power which God has delegated to you, and of which He will demand a strict account. By his blessing on your pious labours, may both sons and daughters hereafter 'arise, and call you blessed.' And in the great day of general account, may every Christian mother be enabled through divine grace to say, with humble confidence, to her Maker and Redeemer, 'Behold the children whom Thou hast given me !'"

MRS. GIBSON'S funeral was attended by a large number of the members of different religious commu-

nities, anxious to testify their esteem for her character, and their sense of the public loss occasioned by her death. The Trustees of Brunswick chapel have kindly permitted a plain slab to be placed near the communion table, with the following inscription. The epitaph is from the pen of Mr. Montgomery.

Sacred to the Memory

OF

JANE, THE BELOVED WIFE

OF

**THOMAS CUMMINGS GIBSON, OF NEWCASTLE
ON TYNE;**

**WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE IN THE FULL ASSURANCE OF
FAITH, DECEMBER THE 8TH, 1835,**

AGED 38 YEARS.

LIFE, death and judgment, time, eternity,
Exalted spirit, now are known to thee;
Life thou hast proved a flowery, thorny way,
Death one dark moment bursting into day,
And judgment, mercy, since among the blest,
Thee as His own thy Saviour hath confest;
Time and eternity thenceforth are one,
Heaven's glory crowns what grace on earth begun.
Sweet were thy last faint accents, "All is well;"
But how much better now, thou may'st not tell;
And yet the best remains, when thou shalt meet
Thy loved and loving friends round Jesu's feet.

THE END.

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THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF
THE CHILDREN OF RELIGIOUS PARENTS:
a Sermon, preached in Oldham-Street Chapel, Man-
chester, May 26th, 1837. BY FRANCIS A. WEST.
Published by Request.





